

**Workplace Spirituality: Profile and Influence of
Spiritually-Inspired Business Leaders -
A Cross Cultural Perspective**

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ABSTRACT

The concepts of spirituality and religion were until recently either ignored or avoided in the business world. However, in the last decade, there has been an upsurge of interest in these areas within the academic and practitioner world of business management, as Western and Eastern cultural worldviews collide in a rapidly globalising and chaotic business environment. Writers in the field of management, leadership and organisation behaviour have since begun to leap into the ‘soft management’ bandwagon where emotions and spirituality in the workplace, are currently hot topics.

The work environment, which is central to the existence of most people, is increasingly seen to be a place where people engage in creative activity in search of the fundamental meaning, purpose and value in their lives. In an era of internationalization where business professionals are forced to navigate and negotiate in cultural systems which are significantly different to their own value systems this cross-cultural study was conducted in Australia and Malaysia, to provide some contrast of the two cultures with a focus in the area of spirituality at work. It advances the idea that business management theory and practice which typically embody Western secular value systems may not adequately represent the world views in Eastern cultures where religious and spiritual values hold sway even in work environments.

Employing a methodology more commonly used in the fields of psychology and social sciences known as heuristics, this inter-disciplinary study offers a uniquely in-depth and profound investigation into the “inner spaces” and tacit dimensions, which are neither penetrable nor conceivable for empirical examination, with lesser methods of inquiry. Besides this unique methodology, the rigour of this research design also lies in its, longitudinal timeframe spanning

over ten years, which allowed for the development of trust and rapport building to collect authentic, insightful, introspective data from fifty over participants in two countries.

This research proposes a “new socio-spiritual model” incorporating spiritual dimensions as an underlying tacit force within spiritually-inspired leaders whose outer engagements are steadfastly anchored on an inner spiritual resolve. The study provides evidence to suggest that spiritually-inclined leaders’ personal values are consistent to their spiritual ideals and they influence their workplace with a blend of qualities that is deeply inspiring, motivating and meaningful to co-workers. Values such as genuine care, compassion, clarity and integrity in their core personality provides for a magnetic appeal.

Co-workers appear to innately intuit and trust the genuine natures of such individuals to willingly cooperate and devotedly assist in the interest of such leadership. These spiritually-inspired individuals impacted their workplaces in two ways. Firstly, the co-workers who worked with spiritually-inspired leaders, displayed high motivation and satisfaction, enjoying a good sense of meaning and purpose at work. Secondly, the workplace environment had an inclusive climate where members experienced high trust and collegiality. The socio-spiritual model, based on tacit dimensions offer an alternative holistic viewpoint, to present a more universal management paradigm that is relevant for the modern era.

PUBLICATIONS/CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Journal Publications

Purushothaman, K., & Sohal, A. S. (2003). Bridging East and West: Transforming management for the digital economy. *International Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 6(1), 294–306.

Conference Proceedings

Purushothaman, K., & Howell, A. (2007). The business of business is beyond just business: is the soul of business in the hands of the leader? In S.S.Sengupta and D.Fields (Eds.), *Inaugural Conference on Integrating Spirituality and Organisational Leadership* (pp. 259–284). New Delhi: Macmillan India.

Purushothaman, K. (2002). Ancient Scientific Spiritual Wisdom Redefines Modern Management. In M. Black (Ed.), *5th International Spirituality Leadership and Management (SlaM) Conference. Creating and Honouring Connection* (pp. 225–235), Australia: SlaM Network Ltd.

Conference Presentations

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DEDICATION

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥१॥

Gurur-Brahmaa Gurur-Vissnur-Gururdevo Maheshvarah

Gurure va Param Brahma Tasmai Shrii-Gurave Namah:

The Vedic Verse above is an ancient Sanskrit chant honouring the teachers in our lives.

It has the following meaning:

The Guru, (Dispeller of Darkness/Ignorance) is the representative of Brahma
who creates and implants Knowledge,
of Vishnu who protects and sustains it,
and of Shiva who removes and destroys ignorance.
The Guru is verily the Supreme Truth.
Unto that Guru I offer my salutations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

There is a sufficiency in the world for man's need but not for man's greed.

Mahatma Gandhi

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There is no denying that business enterprises of today are powerful institutions. Wielding this power are men and women at their helm. Regardless of their size, modern businesses have resources that pose them as double-edged swords. They perform great deeds in some instances and at other times, also inflict great harm. In international operations, their impact is quite often felt on a global scale. The influence and legacies of these business leaders are often beyond their own imaginations. What is at stake when business is run by irresponsible leaders? What if these business professionals perform their roles from their highest human potential? Spiritual traditions for centuries depict that, in essence, *Man is Divine*. The question then is, if man was to act from this pure potentiality, what would be his impact on the world? How does a spiritually-inspired person lead in a competitive business environment where often the existing norms may be far from spiritual? What impact or influence do such leaders have amongst their peers, their subordinates and their engagement in the larger community? This study probes these intriguing questions in what began as an empirical exploratory journey investigating the intricacies of workplace spirituality among business leaders. Its longitudinal time frame, over a decade, meant that the research was further informed by increasing new knowledge in the field throughout the duration of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Although the study of spirituality as it relates to business management and leadership was slow in its entry into mainstream academia and the world of the business practitioner, it has steadily gained momentum and recognition within a short period of time particularly within the last two decades. Karakas (2010a) in his review of literature on spirituality and organizational performance provides evidence of the growing interest in workplace spirituality, with some books on spirituality, work and leadership remaining best-sellers. According to Gibbons (2000), since 1990, spirituality and religion and the '*ensoulment*' of corporate life have been among the fastest growing segment of the book market. Others have recounted how spirituality has gained much attention in the popular and academic press (Rojas, 2002; Bolman & Deal, 2001; Biberman & Whitty, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999a; Neal, Lichtenstein & Banner, 1999). Workplace Spirituality also appears as a topic in management and organisational behaviour textbooks used at graduate and undergraduate levels business programs (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg & Coulter, 2006; Robbins, 2003). Spirituality, as it pertains to the workplace, has steadily risen, indicating that both scholars and practitioners have begun to see spirituality as a legitimate area of interest in organizational management.

Also there has been a proliferation of conferences, seminars and workshops on the theme within business and academic communities, indicating the interest that both scholars and practitioners have in examining the paradigm shifts that is occurring in the world of business and work. Conferences on spirituality and business have been springing up around the world with a variety of websites dedicated to this topic. According to Rigoglioso (2005), the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, devoted a session to "spiritual anchors to the new millennium". More significantly, the Academy of Management, the world's oldest and largest preeminent scholarly association for academics and practitioners of management progressively established a

new interest group division called “Management, Spirituality and Religion (MSR)” in 2000 and the Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion was established in 2002 to address the specialized theoretical and research concerns of academics (Fry, (2008). It is an urgent response to find new solutions and ideas to a fast evolving and changing business environment with a multitude of cross-border, cross-cultural challenges in a global economy.

In 2008, the Conference Symposia on Management Spirituality and Religion, included a proposal to explore ways in Indian meditative techniques and Eastern contemplative and martial arts practices such as Aikido and Tai Chi to help managers and academics more deeply engage on the issues related to compassionate leadership and transformational change (Biberman,2008). It highlights the growing curiosity and acceptance of spiritual practices from a variety of world traditions. It also indicates the openness to consider cross-cultural ancient techniques of spirituality suggesting a revival, renewal and relevance of ancient wisdom philosophies aimed at bridging Eastern and Western worlds for the purpose of sharing and seeking techniques relevant for business challenges of modern times. As a result, despite years of voracious debate and critique, the concept of spirituality is now firmly anchored as a legitimate emerging concern for management thought and practice.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The majority of the world’s population today live in a modern, sophisticated and complex global reality. The economic processes in nations through the creative and innovative intelligence of corporate enterprise have been the main driving force of this new reality. As economic enterprise play such a fundamental role in societies globally, the spotlight falls fittingly on the crucial role and effect of leaders in business in the post-modern era. In today’s global economy, it is critical for leaders in business to rise above national, political, ethnic, religious and all other social divides, in their thought and actions especially when engaged in international trade and

cross-cultural ventures that go beyond national identities and boundaries. Human Development Report (2006) cautions that a high GDP does not necessarily, translate to progress in human development. In other words, economic prosperity does not appear to guarantee human development.

1.3.1 Why business success need to be re-defined?

When economic profitability of business overrides human and socio-welfare considerations and when success does not include the measurement of human well-being and a more equitable distribution of the world's wealth, the consequences to the present and future inhabitants of the world appear dire and threatened. Therefore, although businesses play a crucial role in the wealth of nations, and are key drivers of socio-economic and cultural transformations of the modern world, there is also a shadow side to business prosperity. Businesses, including reputable large enterprises, stand accused for many of the devastating global issues such as environmental degradation, social pathologies like poverty, hunger and famine due to inequitable distribution of wealth, widening gaps between the haves and have not's, causing human suffering and risking the future survival in and of the planet.

1.3.2 Why an inclusive mind-set is needed in business leadership?

Decision-makers in business corporations, large and small, have been guilty of causing great damage in the past and unfortunately their negative legacies could last into distant futures, long after their retirements. Major headline grabbing news in the world's media such as the insider trading scams at Wall Street (Taibbi, 2011); BP oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010 (Crone and Tolstoy, 2010); the fall of the American energy company Enron (Gordon, 2002), followed by the dissolution of Arthur Andersen Corporation for its fraudulent audit and accountancy partnership in 2001(Waddock, 2005); the disastrous nuclear accident in Chernobyl

in 1986 (Kazakov, Demidchik, & Astakhova, 1992); the Bhopal toxic chemical gas disaster in India in 1984 (Jones, 1988) and the more recent crisis in Japan at the Fukushima nuclear plant following the March 2011 earthquake are only a handful of business scandals and environmental disasters that has left a devastating impact on human societies and the natural environment. Central to all these events are key decision-makers, often leaders in their enterprises who either offend knowingly or unknowingly. For real positive changes to occur, business leaders need to develop a more inclusive mind-set beyond fulfilling shareholder obligations. The idea of an inclusive mind is more commonly explored in the education sector (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Rayner, 2009; Muijs et al., 2010) and is fairly new in the leadership literature where it is couched under the theoretical framework of relational leadership which according to Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon & Ziv (2010) is an understudied area in leadership theories. Kaiser and Hogan (2007) in their elucidation on “The Dark side of Discretion” make the point that although discretion is necessary for a leader to make positive contributions to their organisations, it also provides the potential to disrupt and destroy them, thus making a clear link between a leader’s personality and organisational failure.

1.3.3 Why the triple-bottom line needs to be genuinely espoused?

As the list of major corporate scams, crimes and industrial disasters seem to be on the rise, the flaws of the profit driven paradigm which has driven business organisations for several decades has been under revised scrutiny. With stronger social activism and demand for transparency and responsibility of business operations, many organizations are espousing a new KPI for business leaders to show integrity by adopting the triple bottom line – healthy profits balanced with an active social and environmental agenda (Fry and Slocum, 2008; Bass, 2000; Kurth 2003, McLaughlin, 2004). Despite such efforts Norman & Macdonald (2004) point out that although the triple bottom-line accounting is becoming increasingly fashionable, many

organizations use the rhetoric simply as a smokescreen to avoid true environmental and social reporting on performance.

1.3.4 Why compassion and consciousness is needed in business leadership

The last few decades also saw major work-life upheavals such as corporate downsizing, re-engineering, layoffs and high unemployment, all of which impact upon worker morale and threaten to undermine workplace cultures (Tang and Fuller, 1995). Rising work-related stress and emotional pain in work organizations lead to toxic work environments (Frost, 2003) which need to be managed by ensuring leaders and managers institutionalize compassion and management of emotional pain in organizations. This naturally requires a new level of consciousness and a new brand of organizational leadership. The pressures faced by those in leadership positions are compelling, but what can leaders do differently to meet these high expectations?

1.3.5 Why ethics education in business schools need to be evaluated

Going by the number of constant business scandals and transgressions in the media, it is reasonable cause to question whether ethics training make any impact at all on business graduates. These business school graduates go on to become essential decision-makers and some offend, violate, and cause great harm as business practitioners. However, it is also fair to note that business practitioners have to function and make decisions in often aggressive, bloodthirsty and competitive or even corrupt business environments in non-level playing fields. Trevino and Brown (2004) clarify that unethical conduct is not quite so straightforward. They speculate that ethical transgression is the result not just of unethical offenders, but of neglectful leadership and organizational cultures that send mixed messages about what is important and what is expected through an organisation's culture and value systems. Thus, it is not surprising that corporate transgressions are more often than not conducted not by dangerous criminals but by eminent

members of society, well-educated and trained sometimes from the best business schools around the world. When practitioners are driven by the ethos of winning at all cost in vastly competitive environments, there is the tendency to abuse their powers causing white collar crime to rise with more and more cases of business persons succumbing to questionable conduct.

Waddock (2002) demands for a critical look at how today's business schools are teaching tomorrow's leaders. Waddock decrees that managers and leaders need to recognize that we all live on a single planet with limited resources and so our interconnectivity and interdependency requires recognition that, what happens in the economic realm affects societies, natural resources and day to day lives of ordinary people. She bemoans the inadequacy of management education made up of distinct functional disciplines that "tends to be about parts (that) do not necessarily add up to wholes" (2005, p.149). Waddock (2005) calls for a more integrated management education where students must understand social and human values such as love, community, spirituality, connection to self, others, and nature, and the drive to find meaning.

1.3.6 How spirituality can play a role in global business leadership

Bandura, Caprara & Zsolnai (2007) explain that transgressing conduct is regulated by either personal or social sanctions. The first is based on self-condemnation to one's own misconduct and the latter by the fear of external punishment. With the increasing sophistication of conducting business internationally in various countries, ethical considerations can become intricately complicated. Jackson (1999) highlights that companies that do business around the world, tend to adopt either a compliance or code driven ethics program. Jackson points out that these international executives are often confronted with moral challenges, which goes beyond adhering to external controls or minimal legalistic standards. He suggest that when dealing in foreign cultures, adopting spiritual principles and values based on world religions provide a deeper foundation for principles of international business ethics and provide executives with greater

guidance through an inner moral judgement rather than an external compliance and control approach. It shows that in unpredictable business terrains and unfamiliar conditions, spirituality, which is based on universal principles, presents a simple but potentially potent dimension for executives in foreign operations to be more accepting and inclusive of traditions different to their home country.

Collier (2006) concurs that spirituality, in the broad sense, provides a deeper foundation for principles of international business ethics than legalistic, command-based ethics programs. Developing higher values at work, characterized by an evolved-state of consciousness to guide or enhance the behaviour and conduct of business professionals in the complex world of business is advanced by Karakas (2010a). Karakas categorizes the benefits of spirituality from a human resource, philosophical and interpersonal perspectives for employees and organisations. Firstly, from the human resource perspective, spirituality deals with the wellbeing and quality of life of the employee. Secondly, from a philosophical perspective, spirituality provides a sense of purpose and meaning and finally, from the inter-personal perspective, it gives employees a sense of interconnectedness and community at work. All of these ultimately serve the interest of the goal attainment in organisations.

1.3.7 Spirituality for a brand of humane management

Underlying every business is a systemic, interconnected, holistic phenomenon. Thus, business operatives are only different in their scale and scope. Irrespective of what the business is producing, from manufacturing the simplest to the most sophisticated of products or in providing the most gross to the most refined of services, every business essentially is a human institution. In other words, all business activity ultimately serves some human need. As a result, the need to balance contemporary economic challenges with humane concerns has led to greater emphasis on subjects such as ethics, sustainability and corporate social responsibility beyond profit

maximization and mindless commercialization. Rimanoczy (2010) in her study of business leaders found that those who engaged in a spiritual journey acted responsibly and sustainably in their roles. They were individuals whose spiritual journeys connected them to a desire for making a difference, who appreciated the many social and environmental problems, thus committed to fostering sustainability. This idea of business organisations as instruments of social responsibility (Gioia, 2003) is becoming common, as the post-modern era is calling for more responsible and conscious companies (Vasconcelos, 2011).

1.3.8 Spirituality for meaning and purpose at work

Marques, Dhiman and King (2005) believe environmental forces such as socio-political and cultural reasons continue to drive transformations in the workplace. These include in the new era, an increasing search for meaning through work, the quest for stability in an unstable world, movements towards more holistic living, and greater empowerment of women, and the natural progression of developed countries from physical needs to intellectual and emotional fulfilment. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) cite ageing “baby boomers” who are contemplating life’s deeper meaning as they edge toward their mortality; and the increasing pressure of global competition and diversity that requires the nurturing of employee creativity. Neal (2000) and Nash & Stewart (2002) argue for people’s need to have a deeper sense of meaning at work. Wong (2002) argues that ‘social-spiritual’ capital (in terms of ethics, relationships, meaning and purpose) is necessary for any business organisation to be productive and successful. These efforts should include care for worker’s basic need for physical health and safety needs; care of their mind which includes emotional and intellectual needs for belonging, learning and growth and finally soul needs, for meaning, a sense of purpose and connectedness. The first two needs are becoming fairly standard occupational health and safety (OHS) policy at least in most workplaces in advanced nations, but the soul or spiritual needs of workers which is primal and a core tacit dimension is an invisible

matter and hence often conveniently ignored. These issues have generally been cited for the stirring of religion and spirituality as a subject of renewed interest among scholars and practitioners in business.

1.3.9 Spirituality for synergistic relationship between leaders and stakeholders

These various reasons suggesting an evolutionary shift occurring at personal, societal, cultural realms provide momentum towards the reckoning in higher states of consciousness in individuals. Ultimately, when businesses are managed by people with good core values, the business and its stakeholders are likely to succeed and excel in the long-term. In this respect, it can be argued that newer forms of leading and managing such as Vaill's (1989) fifth organisational dimension – spirituality - overlooked for many years, now in the present era is seeing a revival. Fairholm, (1997) explains that leaders must get in touch with their own spiritual natures and develop a sense of the spiritual essence of their followers. This, according to Fairholm, creates an organization where the essential spiritual needs of each member are considered. Leadership studies have been evolving with many dimensions, for instance charismatic leadership, (Conger, 1993, 1989; Conger & Kanungo 1987,1994, ; Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993), transformational leadership, (Dvir, Eden, Avolio & Shamir, 2002; Conger & Hunt,1999; Hunt & Conger,1999; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999), visionary leadership, (Westley, & Mintzberg, 1989; Fairholm, 1997, 1994); Fairholm and Gilbert,1994, servant leadership (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Russell & Stone, 2002; Greenleaf, 1977) and to add to this list the concept of the recently introduced spiritual leadership (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013; Fry, 2003, 2005; Benefiel, 2005; Fairholm 1996). Spiritual leadership is a fairly new arrival in a series of leadership theory to evolve with the changing nature of work and organizational life. Fry & Nisiewicz (2013) explains spiritual leadership to “involve intrinsically motivating and inspiring

workers through hope/faith in a vision of service to key stakeholders and a corporate culture based on altruistic love” (p.4).

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PURPOSE AND AIMS

This study hopes to demystify the concept of spirituality to arrive at a clearer depiction of what epitomises spiritual leadership. Against the many worrisome global trends discussed in the previous section, one of the main aims of this research is to consider if individuals were to invest time and effort in developing their core values anchored on an inner spiritual enquiry, are they more likely to improve in conduct through an expanded awareness and consciousness? Would spirituality encourage managers and leaders to be self-motivated and regulated by an inner wisdom rather than by often inadequate external controls? Sengupta (2010) in her study of managerial effectiveness found a significant positive correlation between spiritual orientation and perceived satisfaction and success in a manager’s career. Cunha, Rego & D’Olivier (2006) opined that there was an inherently implied relationship between spirituality and management. These authors expanded on Barley and Kunda’s ideas that “all theories have an ideological component” (1992, p.363) by suggesting that “all theories have a spiritual component” (2003, p.21). In other words, they imply that spirituality is not merely a relevant dimension but a tacit critical component of business organizations throughout the world. So despite the long due validation and acknowledgement of spirituality as a pertinent aspect in modern business, the study of a tacit formless concept poses great challenges to researchers in the field.

1.4.1 Tacit and explicit dimensions of spirituality

Spirituality is discussed in two distinct dimensions namely tacit (formlessness) and explicit (physical form). In the first dimension, spirituality which is considered by many as an absolute,

boundless, all-pervasive, universal concept that presents a paradoxical challenge when it is to be studied in a highly structured, stringent academic process and discussed in an objectively contained, limited, identifiable explicit form. So while the research questions for this research project was formed based on observable phenomenon in the world of objects, through explicit expressions (spiritual process or practice), spirituality is also recognized as a tacit end (spiritual state of being).

Ashforth and Pratt (2003) discuss these two dimensions of spirituality conceptualized as a verb, such as one seeking towards a higher state of being, through a variety of spiritual practices, for example, by engaging in prayer, meditation, religious rites and rituals and charitable actions. The second dimension of spirituality is often conceptualized as a noun when it is described as a spiritual destination or state of being, such as a transformed state of oneness, connectedness, wholeness, self-realization, self-actualization, nirvana, moksha and so forth. This research acknowledges that spirituality can be considered in both these dimensions and for the purpose of this research project would explore both dimensions. Given that business organizations are primarily serving an economic agenda, most research in the area of workplace spirituality focused its relationship to practical, socio-economic outcomes within business environments (Tischler 1999, Jackson 1999, Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Fry, 2008). Thus, spirituality was considered as a tangible process mainly to enhance organizational activity. This practical dimension of spirituality is often seen to be highly relevant to organizations as they focus on the utilitarian value of spirituality at work that might assist with the urgent and pragmatic concerns of a business enterprise. It is a cause for concern that in serving the underlying capitalistic motive of business and the tendency to '*commodify*' all human activity to serve the fundamental economic bottom-line needs of the business, spirituality risks becoming a rudimentary convenient means towards serving a material purpose.

For some serious practitioners, spirituality is pursued as a sacred personal journey, with sincere patience and regular practices leading to a higher state of existence and holistic oneness with others. For such people, profound spiritual practice and indeed all their activity and relationships while they engage in the world is for the sole or main purpose of arriving at this state of inner peace and ultimate wholeness. In other words, if they worked, the workplace becomes a field for them to practice their spiritual values in the journey towards their ultimate goal of realizing their highest divine self. Such individuals naturally hold an inner awareness and personal commitment to achieve spiritual mastery and perfection.

1.4.2 Spirituality-religiosity distinction

The spirituality-religiosity distinction is given a careful consideration in the literature review in Chapter 2. In the meantime suffice to say that the confusion and mix-up between what is spirituality and not religion, and what is religion and not spirituality adds a further complexity to the research questions to be addressed. This research aims to highlight some of the intricacies for business leaders who as sincere seekers of spiritual growth need to navigate the secular and pragmatic business terrain. The possibility for collision of personal spiritual values against pragmatic and sometimes fierce and cold-hearted business values could cause a conflicting moral dilemma.

1.4.3 Codifying spirituality

Like other tacit knowledge, spirituality is difficult to codify, more so when it is experienced as a state of being beyond mere emotion or intellection. As discussed by Berman, Down and Hill, if indeed knowledge could be codified, it would no longer be tacit knowledge, but it would be converted to explicit knowledge (2002, p.14). To legitimize this field as a subject for scientific enquiry, researchers have attempted to even develop an instrument to measure spirituality within

organizational settings (Beazley, 1997). However, Beazley defends the attempt at measurement by highlighting that “while human beings may never understand the Ineffable and, in that sense, the source of spirituality, they do have the capability to understand and even to measure the manifestations of spirituality in human cognition, emotion and behaviour (p.9)”. The rationale here is that, although spirituality may be an unobservable tacit resource, its effects are manifested in phenomenological experiences and hence becomes an observable and measurable phenomenon. Accordingly, this research highlights that while personal spirituality is tacit, its presence in, and relevance to the workplace, is observable through the explicit personal stories and individual experiences. The author humbly and respectfully acknowledges that the ultimate enlightened state of being is beyond any practical range of measurement or articulation.

1.4.4 Eastern versus Western perspective on spirituality

As a discipline, management thought and ideas largely originate from the West, more specifically Europe and America. This simply is the way management has evolved, despite a growing awareness of other cultures, traditions, and world-views. Do these management philosophies of Western origin sufficiently address the challenges managers face in the present era? With the growing internationalisation of business, managers increasingly find themselves operating in regional environments experiencing cultural diversity. This is leading modern management into becoming an increasingly demanding and varied field. It is the aim of this research to demystify the subject of spirituality and to consider its relevance in a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural perspective. This is important because spirituality ultimately is considered to be a universal principle, and on that premise, ought to be applicable in all disciplines, in all cultural circumstances.

1.4.5 Impact of workplace spirituality

The final aim of this research is to consider the impact of workplace spirituality on human well-being. In recognition of the present world which has been fundamentally altered by the digital age, mediated by fast expanding information and communication technologies; blurring of boundaries and challenging old modes of thinking - all of which challenges outmoded processes which requires newer ways of doing things. Beyond addressing the bottom-line concerns of management practitioners, spiritual virtues incorporated into the workplace would improve the way businesses treat the environment and the communities they serve and effect. Most of all, the workers within such work environments develop a deep sense of meaning and balance in their lives, which then cascades back to society as a ripple effect through their relationships in their immediate families and on to the larger society. Hence, true societal transformation can emerge, if businesses adopt management and business practice based on spiritual virtues. It is the aim of this research to investigate the various kinds of effort and impact made by spiritually-inspired leaders to nurture the holistic well-being of their workers.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This current study is significant on a number of levels.

1.5.1 Strength of longitudinal, multidimensional exploratory research design

The study is unique for its longitudinal time frame, which provided a decade of immersion and growth in the subject matter of spirituality. The benefit was two-pronged. Firstly, in providing an extended opportunity for forging strong trusting links between the researcher and her subjects, the researcher was able to observe her key research subjects for changes or deepening of their values with the passing of significant events during that period of time. This was important because it permitted the researcher to observe the (spiritually guided) response of

the key subjects to important or significant events that occurred in that protracted time, within their professional and personal lives. Secondly, for the researcher personally, it allowed time to evolve within her own spiritual journey, which again legitimised the research from the angle of a participative observer rather than from a mere objective independent observer to capture the fine shades and depth of the phenomenon under investigation. Finally, the interdisciplinary nature of this research on two otherwise distinct fields - spirituality (philosophy) and business management, along with its cross-cultural (Eastern and Western) perspective, makes a contribution in a budding workplace spirituality field where few comparative research exist. The research design provides a multi-dimensional viewpoint to analyse the relevance and impact of spirituality from the angle of business leaders who as key participants were triangulated with independent accounts from their immediate family members, co-workers (current and former) at the workplace and also independent consultants unrelated to the key participants offering a rare multiple lens comprehensive view of spiritually inspired personalities. The key participants are closely studied in an extended phase to understand the impact of their inner spiritual values upon organizational members within two distinct Eastern and Western cultural perspective. The study provides a qualitative depth for understanding the relevance of spirituality to leaders and their followers within business work environments.

1.5.2 Addressing the “Eastern” viewpoint

This study is also predicated on the premise that the dichotomy of the Eastern versus Western thought is not sufficiently addressed in the workplace spirituality literature. As the mainstream academic marketplace is becoming flooded with more and more publications in the field of workplace spirituality, the depth of the spiritual dimension is often casually discussed as an intellectual pastime, lacking in reverence for its real sacred depth. Some present age modern spiritual philosophers lament that the modern climate of East meets West brings a real risk of

superficiality in examining the subject related to a supreme ideal held sacred for thousands of years through the ages in many ancient cultures (Wilber, 1997a). In the midst of the current surge of interest replete with peddling of so-called spiritual products and services, the spiritual dimension is becoming a marketplace from massage to meditation therapies, creating a sub-culture of spiritual falsehood and risking further confusion of the mundane with the sacred. The superficiality in interpretation of higher spiritual truths by casual seekers, intellectuals and practitioners threatens to dilute the radical demands of true spiritual seeking (Wilber, 1997a, Cohen 1997). In an interview with Blacker (1997), Georg Feuerstein, who had been instrumental in the dissemination of Eastern ways of wisdom in the West, offers his viewpoint that ancient Eastern practices transplanted to the contemporary West is often watered down versions from its original teachings in order to make them palatable to Western consumerism. Such critique would be fairly considered in the current research as an Eastern and Western sample was sought in a bid to empirically consider if such critical review is a fair assessment.

With the growing internationalization and globalization of business, managers and leaders increasingly find themselves operating in regional environments experiencing cultural diversity, leading modern management into an increasingly demanding and varied field. Thus, the East meets West phenomenon raises some cross-cultural issues of spirituality. Some of these issues has been addressed in the context of workplace diversity (Cash & Gray 2000; Lewis and Geroy, 2000; Hicks 2003) and management education (Barnett & Krell, 2000; Schmidt-Wilk & Heaton, 2000; Epstein, 2002; Daniels & Franz, 2002; Brown, 2003; Lips-Wiersma, 2004; Narayanswamy, 2008). Inter-faith comparative studies investigated in a single cultural setting such as the work by Fernando & Jackson (2006) exists. Also cross-cultural comparisons in the areas of ethics and cultural dimensions are extensive in the literature. However, up to this point, to the best knowledge of the researcher, there is no evidence of an empirical cross-cultural comparative

study representing an Eastern and Western case sample conducted in two countries to represent two distinct national cultures in the field of workplace spirituality. In this study one set of research sample was obtained in Malaysia to represent the Eastern culture and the other set of sample was obtained from Australians of Anglo-Saxon descent to represent the Western culture. The study is also conducted by a researcher who traverses both worlds fairly skilfully given her Eastern cultural heritage but with strong exposure and acquaintance with Western culture, which aided in obtaining good insight and representation between the two perspectives.

1.5.3 Heuristics methodology

Finally, methodologically this study is unique in that it utilises a research methodology that is rarely used in business management research. The subject of inquiry concerns a tacit dimension which in essence, comprises an internal, personal and often intimate experience within individual personalities. It therefore is a study of a highly subjective phenomenon. Generally, any scientific study at a doctoral level research requires a level of detached impartiality and objective focus on empirical-based evidence. However, clearly these academic criteria could easily preclude the study of tacit dimensions involving inner psycho-social personal experiences. On this basis, spirituality as an inner-world experience is difficult to be measured or empirically studied even though direct human experience is a realm closest to all humans living and functioning in this complex world. Nevertheless, this does not mean it cannot stand up to scientific inquiry. Wilber (1999, p.43) asserts that direct spiritual experience, is "repeatable, reproducible and confirmable" which indicates that it qualifies for the basic criterion of a scientific inquiry. Subsequently, a main consideration was choosing a method of inquiry that would do justice to the required depth and intimate involvement necessary to investigate spirituality as subject of inquiry.

Etherington (2004) makes a case for reflexive research which in contrast to traditional impersonal approaches acknowledges the impact of the researcher's own history, experiences,

beliefs and culture on the processes and outcomes of inquiry. According to Etherington, being aware of one's own live concerns, the interaction and dialogue with participants during the fieldwork can achieve a level of close rigour that is required of good qualitative research.

In this study the value of reflexive research was achieved, through the incubation phase of the Heuristics research design (see Figure 1.1), the researcher undertook an eight month intense spiritual study in an ashram in India, to reconcile with her own spiritual uncertainties (detailed in Chapter 3). This proved to be invaluable during fieldwork, as it was greatly advantageous to quickly establish a level of deep trust and agency with research participants. With some self-disclosure on her own spiritual journey, the researcher was able to engage research subjects more genuinely as they were encouraged to openly share on a deeply personal subject they otherwise may only reveal amongst their closest, most trusted acquaintances.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were developed to establish if there was awareness and use of tacit spiritual values that promote greater meaning, purpose, and motivation and worker satisfaction at the workplace. These four research questions guide this study.

1. How aware are key managers and leaders of their own spiritual beliefs and values?
2. What are some of the workplace value systems observed among organizational members?
3. What are some of the spiritual dimensions observed or practiced in the workplace?
4. To what degree has spiritual dimensions influenced or enhanced workplace behaviour and activity?

An underlying spirit of enquiry is about conducting research in ways that may possibly generate new concepts and broaden old views. According to Kuhn (1996), research means to “re-search” or to see with new eyes. The idea is to capture old knowledge in new ways or to generate new concepts and broaden our perspectives and perceptions. Spirituality per se is an old subject, which has seen a new revival in the wake of modern day economic and cultural stress, which has spurred this trend.

1.7 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A theme emerging in management literature is that workplace spirituality, business ethics and leadership are related. The conceptual framework of this research is based on the interrelationship between these three concepts. To inform on the tacit subject of spirituality, Wilber’s (1997b) Integral Theory of Consciousness was useful. In making the correlation between spirituality and leadership the term ‘spiritually-inspired leadership’ is used for the purpose of this study. The link between these concepts is redefining the emerging notions of successful business practice to include sustainable triple bottom-line considerations as discussed by Fry & Nisiewicz (2013). As reviewed in the preceding sections, the 21st century business workplaces are characterised by intense competition, global diversity, uncertainty, corporate scandals, a search for meaning and purpose beyond blind materialism. This complex dynamic external environment is best captured using a combination of both systems and chaos theory which will be discussed in-depth in Chapter 3.

Given the complex and dynamic change occurring in the world, the shifting paradigms taking place in disciplines such as physics, biology, social-psychology, engineering and other fields (Kossmann & Bullrich, 1997) also has a spill over effect into the field of business management. This can be observed by calls for management theory and practice to be more responsive to the widespread demand for a more inclusive, equitable, connected, prudent, secure

sustainable paradigm (Gladwin, Kennelly, & Krause, 1995). In business management thought, this shift in paradigms can be observed through the development of general systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968), systems thinking and organisational learning (Kim & Senge 1994) and the principle of “self-organization” systems inspired from the field of biology (Serugendo et al., 2004) which suggest that the era of instability with periods of chaos leads to adaptation, creativity, and self-renewal. Subsequently, this study on spiritually-inspired leaders is predicated on the critique for a more sustainable paradigm in business management.

1.8 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

This study contributes to the literature submitting that value-based organisations relying on tacit spiritual dimensions is an alternative model to the resource-based organisational paradigms which has dominated business environments. It proposes that spiritually-inspired leaders in the area of workplace spirituality can bring a paradigm shift to the field of business management. The much misunderstood dimension of spirituality within an individual may be the critical missing trajectory that is yet to be fully explored and may well represent the missing piece in the puzzle in understanding the human psyche at work. The present study seeks to address this gap in mainstream management literature from a cross-cultural perspective. It is envisaged that answering these questions would assist in developing an effective model for transformation of work environments based on a socio-spiritual paradigm.

1.8.1 Methodology and data analysis

Data presented in this research centred around three main themes:

1. The link between the tacit dimension of spirituality and its relevance to the workplace;
2. the attributes of a spiritually-inspired leader and;

- the impact of spiritually-inspired business leaders on the workplace environment, workplace relationships and outcomes.

This is an empirical and qualitative research conducted using a Heuristics methodology comprised of six distinct phases as depicted in Figure 1.1. These six phased Heuristic research design is thoroughly addressed in Chapter 3.

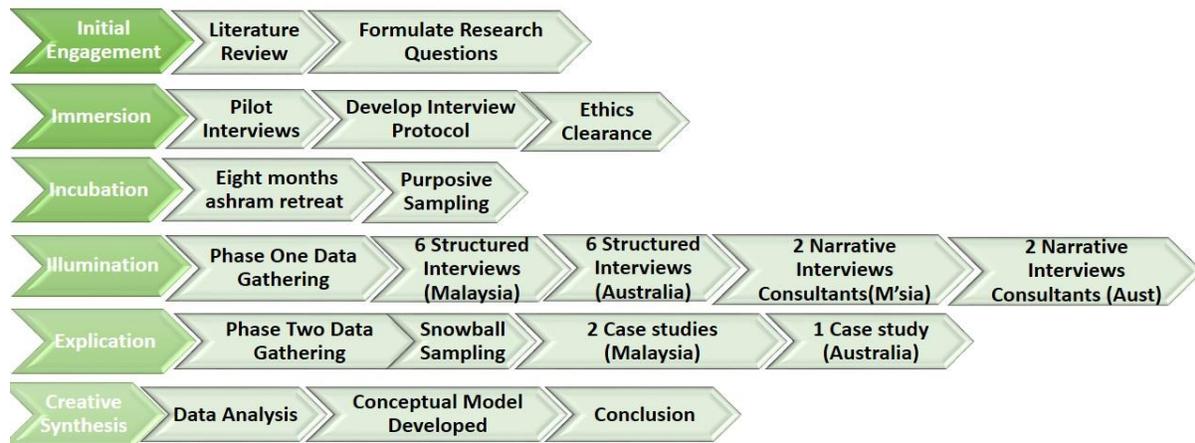


Figure 1.1 Heuristics Methodology and Research Design

1.9 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The following assumptions were recognised to be implicit in this study:

- There is an underlying assumption that spirituality is a universal and innate part of human nature and that it implicitly permeates through the workplace..
- Interviewees were considered to have a fairly adequate level of understanding to competently respond to the questions posed as intended by the researcher.
- There is also an assumption that cultural differences exist between Western and Eastern business settings in the interpretation of spirituality and religion..

4. The data collection method, using in-depth and narrative interviews coupled with case-studies represent an effective means of obtaining comprehensive information and knowledge on spiritually-inspired leaders.
5. The findings collected in the field research provided an effective basis upon which to build a substantive theory.

The following limitations are recognised in this study:

1. The scope of the research was limited to twelve organisations (six organisations representing the East and six more representing the West) in Phase one. In Phase two, three organisations participated in the Case-study analysis (two organisations in the East and one in the West).
2. Analysis of data is based on the interviewee's responses where personal and cultural biases may exist.
3. It is acknowledged that as the sole researcher, results of the study may have been subject to the bias of the researcher's ability to skilfully conduct effective interviews.
4. The number of cultures analysed may be inadequate to generalize the results as representative of the Eastern and Western worlds.

1.10 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This thesis is structured into eight chapters. This present chapter provides an overview of the study with the statement of problem justifying the research aims and purpose of the study. Chapter two follows with an overview of the extant literature covering the broad background and aims of this research discussed in Section 1.2 and 1.3 in this Chapter. Chapter Three outlines the methodology employed in this study including the research design, the description of the sample and research instruments used for data collection. This is followed by Chapter 4 which focuses on

the analysis of the findings in Phase One which was an exploratory phase involving in-depth interviews with business leaders aimed at answering the first research question. Chapter 5 discusses the independent views of the augmented sample of management consultants who, through an open interview method, provided an objective and impartial viewpoint regarding the relevance of spirituality within the business management context. Chapter 6 reports on the second Phase of the research which comprised in-depth case-studies of key participants selected from Phase One together with members of their close family and work associates. Chapter 7 provides a detailed discussion of the overall findings and interpretation of results from Phases One and Two. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes with a general discussion of the findings and contribution of this study and explores implications for future research. This is followed by the appendices and research references used in this study.

1.11 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The terms used in this study are defined as follows:

Workplace spirituality is defined by Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) as a framework of organisational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy.

Spirituality is defined as a type of internal feeling of connectedness with one's complete self. (Mitroff & Denton, 1999a; Zinnbauer, Pargament & Scott, 1999). Rohmann (1999) describes that it can be deduced that the term spirituality has increasingly come to mean the sacralisation of life.

Religion, as defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, is the "belief in a superhuman controlling power especially in a personal God entitled to obedience and worship; expression of

this in worship; a thing that one is devoted to". Heelas (2002, p.358) defines religion as very-much God-centered and seen as institutionalized; involving prescribed rituals; established ways of believing; the 'official', as regulated and transmitted by religious authorities; that which is enshrined in tradition; the ethical commandments of the sacred text; the voice of the authority.of the transcendent. Therefore, religion for many has come to be associated with the formal, dogmatic and hierarchical, if not the impersonal or patriarchal.

Spiritually-Inspired Leaders is a term used in this study to refer to key individuals who dedicatedly espouse either a spiritual or religious, or both values in their personal and professional lives.

1.12 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided the background to the research, making an observation that the workplace spirituality research area is steadily advancing the field of business management. Amongst the many reasons cited for this phenomenon include the pressure for a more sustainable and compassionate model of managing and challenges of leading in the modern business world experiencing chaotic environments. The chapter then proceeded to explain the purpose and aims of this research, highlighting that spiritually-inspired leaders are seen to adopt a more sustainable approach in business management. The study acknowledges that cross-cultural research in this area is lacking and distinctly lopsided to Western perspectives and this study addresses this gap with some comparative evaluation to understand the concept of spirituality and religion (at the workplace), particularly from an Eastern viewpoint. Heuristics is identified as a constructive qualitative research methodology to facilitate the inquiry of this subjective tacit dimension. Finally, assumptions and limitations in this research undertaking are acknowledged and some key terms defined. The following Chapter 2 reviews the literature that supports this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

We are all on a spiritual quest for meaning and the underlying cause of organisational dysfunction, ineffectiveness and all manner of human stress is the lack of spiritual foundation in the workplace

Warren Bennis

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to review the literature relating to the subject of workplace spirituality in the field of business management. The chapter begins by considering the paradigm shifts occurring in the business management domain in Section 2.2. Section 2.3 explains the dominance of Western paradigms in management, while Section 2.4 establishes the context of spirituality and religion within this field. As much confusion over these two concepts persist, with little agreement on the definition of spirituality, Section 2.5 extensively discusses this turmoil to arrive at a working definition within the workplace framework. Section 2.6 explains why spirituality in business management research is on the rise while Section 2.7 speculates on the profile of the business leader of the future. The next section 2.8 reviews the literature on the implications for leaders or managers in business and the new challenges ahead in integrating spirituality into workplace environments. The scope of this study is narrowed to focus on spiritually inspired business leaders and attempts to represent Eastern viewpoints to balance the Western notions that currently predominate in this area. Several theoretical frameworks will be considered in order to understand the contribution spirituality makes to workplace and leadership theories. It is important to note that this literature review is not intended to provide a comprehensive history of neither spiritual-religious traditions nor to extensively cover the vast

field of leadership but rather is designed to present and address the well-defined objectives and scope of this study discussed in the next chapter.

2.2. THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE BUSINESS DOMAIN

The field of business management has always been characterised by the dominance of succeeding paradigms. Clarke and Clegg (2000) highlight that “paradigm shifts today are more challenging because the pace of economic and technological change has accelerated beyond belief” (p. 48). Critiques suggest that the proliferations of management ideas are often simply passing fads (Pascale, 1990; Micklethwaite and Wooldridge, 1996; Miller and Vaughan, 2001). Others such as Follet offer plausible defence suggesting that because organisations are complex dynamic systems dealing with humans and social interaction, therefore no situation can be static for long, hence the milieu of management is active and in constant evolution, requiring new solutions when decision premises constantly shift (Follet, as cited in Miller & Vaughan, 2001). Furthermore, cultural differences impact greatly in determining what works and what doesn't for different societies.

For a long while business management was held to be a secular discipline, with great resistance to the subject of spirituality and religion which can partly be attributed to the rise of intellectual questioning and scientific inquiry in the Age of Reason in the 18th century, also known as Enlightenment that led to the separation of the church and state (Ashforth and Vaidyanath, 2002)..However, as a human and social institution, it was inevitable that issues such as ethics and morality and sacredness of life brought the question of religion and spirituality back into the playing field of business. Buchholz & Rosenthal (2003) indicate that spiritualising the workplace is based on a new understanding of growth - not mere economic growth, but “concrete growth” based on protecting the multiple environments (social, cultural, political and natural environments) with which business is inextricably linked. Clearly, the combined creative and

innovative intelligence of the academia and corporate enterprises contribute significant improvements to the quality of human life. On the flip side however, despite positively driving social, economic and cultural transformation, businesses are also reputed to have caused serious negative impacts. There is ample testimony to suggest that some powerful engines of commerce have also been destructive on a global scale (Hearit & Brown (2004) Compelling evidence exists to show that much of the modern-day woes are directly attributable to flaws of the profit driven machine paradigm, leading to employee distrust in the organisation (Jacobs, 1991; Lavery 1996). Despite widespread criticisms of the reductive, fragmented nature of the old paradigm, most people largely remain enmeshed and imprisoned in this mechanistic mindset (Drengson, 2008). Capra (1997) explains that newer paradigms will either render old ideas obsolete or build on a foundation of preceding paradigms. Capra claims that at a macro level, a general paradigm shift is occurring in society and that the dominant paradigm that had shaped the modern Western society for several hundreds of years is now receding. This dominance he explains also significantly influenced the rest of the world through Western management ideologies.

In recent times, as the voice of pressure groups on sustainable development became louder, many business firms have responded by jumping onto the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) bandwagon (Neal, 1999; Neal, Lichtenstein, and Banner, 1999; Cohen, 1996). However, the motive behind their corporate social enthusiasm is often rooted to economic rationale. Is there real corporate acceptance and awareness that an inherent responsibility of business ought to include psychological, social, cultural, environmental and moral obligations? To make this leap, business organisation needs to cultivate a sense of fellowship and community at work (Izzo & Klein (1998). Shifting from the old mechanistic ways of thinking requires leaders of the future to adopt not just new external structures but more importantly new internal shifts in their consciousness. Business leaders need to understand that effective leadership is much more than a

set of skills or competencies to be acquired. Leadership as an art (Depree, 1989; Klein 1999) involves a set of intrinsic qualities such as a leader's character, beliefs, morals, values, emotions and spirit (Creighton, 1999) are dimensions now being assessed as measures of effective leadership in emerging times.

2.3. DOMINANCE OF WESTERN PARADIGMS IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Western management has dominated the global business scene upholding the supremacy of pragmatic, secular and rationalistic paradigms (Chia, 1996). There is no question that the long-standing mechanistic paradigm of Western management favoured the theory and practice of scientific inquiry..It is commonly known that modern management evolved out of emulating 19th century physical sciences, which were founded on mechanistic, materialist and objectivist world-views. One of the predominant paradigms of the last century was therefore based largely on a logical and mechanistic approach - one that values reason and scientific principles, often times referred to as the machine era paradigm. This paradigm assumes that people can be scientifically measured and categorised using rational principles of scientific management by Taylor and Fayol (1911) and Weber (1904) as cited in (Biberman & Whitty, 1997; Dessler, 1986). The control and fear-based management systems have more recently been rigorously challenged in the academic and business domains. This paradigm is changing as many business enterprises look beyond their bottom line concerns to embrace a wider code of organisational conduct, such as humanistic models and the triple bottom-line movements while some enterprises stretch further to consider the underlying moral fabric and ethical obligations in their business rationale (Gladwin, Kennelly & Krause, 1995; Pirson & Lawrence, 2010; Giacalone & Thompson, 2006). Asfar & Maher (2004), in contrasting the old and new paradigm in business, explain that the new global economic order is built on knowledge, intelligence and innovation rather than on planning, control and obedience (see Table 2.1);

	Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Philosophical orientation	Positivism	Ontology/Epistemology
Business environment	Orderly, predictable sequence of events	Uncertainty and chaos
Organisational metaphor	Machine	Living organism
Mission/purpose	Optimal financial returns to stockholders	Emphasis on the human capital, customers, employees, stockholders, society at large
Organisational structure and leadership	Hierarchical, command & control	Network/participatory
Type of knowledge	Objective and explicit/formal and systematic	Tacit/subjective insight and intuition
Assumptions about employees	Compartmentalised Outer oriented People to fit jobs Homogeneity	Holistic Inner oriented Jobs to fit people Diversity
Major values	Rationality Materialism and consumerism Competition Individualism Exploitation of nature Efficiency	Consciousness Spirituality and relationships Collaboration Community Sustainability/continuous learning Improvement

Table 2.1 The Old and New Business Paradigms (Source: Asfar and Maher (2004))

Asfar & Maher (2004) discuss the changing business paradigms suggesting that leaders and managers need to embrace the principles of the new business paradigms so that “each can become a whole person able to manifest mind, heart and spirit at work” (p.259). They draw attention to the emphasis on human capital and in particular on relationships and the human spirit, as the core of the new business paradigm. Addressing the relevance of spirituality at an organizational level, Loverde (2002a) postulates that a transcendent purpose was one of the early foundations of early capitalism, citing the celebrated work, of the sociologist Max Weber (1958) in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Other researchers have alluded to the idea that there is an inherently implied relationship between spirituality and management (Cunha, Rego & D’Olivier, 2006).

2.4 SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Thomas (2004) warns that the domain of management can be complex as its field extends into indistinct boundaries with a range of specialisations across multidisciplinary subjects. The concepts of spirituality and religion cuts across all disciplines as well and thus considered together within business management, its scope extends far and wide. To keep the scope manageable for a doctoral study, this research was narrowed to consider spiritually-inspired leaders within the emerging field of workplace spirituality in business management. Leadership as a critical factor for organisational success is a vast specialised field in itself and it has evolved with the changing times to remain relevant for the needs of organisational management. The current era marks an interesting time for leaders in business to lead with a high level of consciousness and awareness for issues beyond mere economic concerns. There is now a plethora of research in this field of workplace spirituality or spirit at work movement which has evolved from the mid-1980s.

Although spirituality and religion are both age old concepts, spirituality in the context of modern work organisations is relatively new. This concept has evolved over the years with various equivalent terms such as enlightened management (Maslow, Stephens, Heil & Bennis, 1998), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and often discussed as a moral dilemma of organisations within the broad ethics in business management field (Donaldson, 1982; 1989). As these two key concepts have different connotations with different perspectives, a section is devoted to address the distinction between spirituality and religion and how it's discussed within the framework of this research. As a recent development, spirituality at work or workplace spirituality seems to have a meteoric rise. This study seeks to explore a spiritual-based paradigm relying on tacit spiritual dimensions based on awakened consciousness as an alternative model to

current organisational paradigms. Figure 2.1 in the following page clearly depicts the current research in the context of the new Socio-spiritual paradigm.

For the most part, management research has been focussed in the applied fields, seeking practical solutions for application with a utilitarian intent in the business environment. This field of research is named as the field of action in Figure 2.1. The aim of such action research is “to diagnose problems, implement solutions and assess effects” (Thomas, 2004, p.22). Here, research outcomes or results are seen to solve important practical problems largely considering the distribution and management of organisational resources. Therefore, research of this nature looks into the resource-based organisational paradigms. The next generic set of management research falls under the category named, field of knowledge. Here, the emphasis is largely on yielding new concepts and propositions with a focus on establishing new theory or with an aim to accept, affirm or reject existing theory. Much of this field involves examining driving values and considering the relations between two or more variables. Figure 2.1 refers to this pool of research as those belonging to the Value-based paradigms.

In recent emerging research, there has been a surge of interest towards the spiritual-based organisational paradigms (Neck & Milliman, 1994; Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, & Condemi, 1999). This paradigm shift is a holistic movement away from the reductive, fragmented nature of the old mechanistic paradigms. What is unique and challenging about this pool of research is that it delves into largely unknown and often unquantifiable areas named in Figure 2.1 as the Field of Awakened Consciousness. This kind of research explores the field of tacit knowledge which is intuitional or at the level of deep consciousness and is currently receiving a lot of attention in management and organisational research because it is touted to be the source of creative intelligence (Levine, 1972).

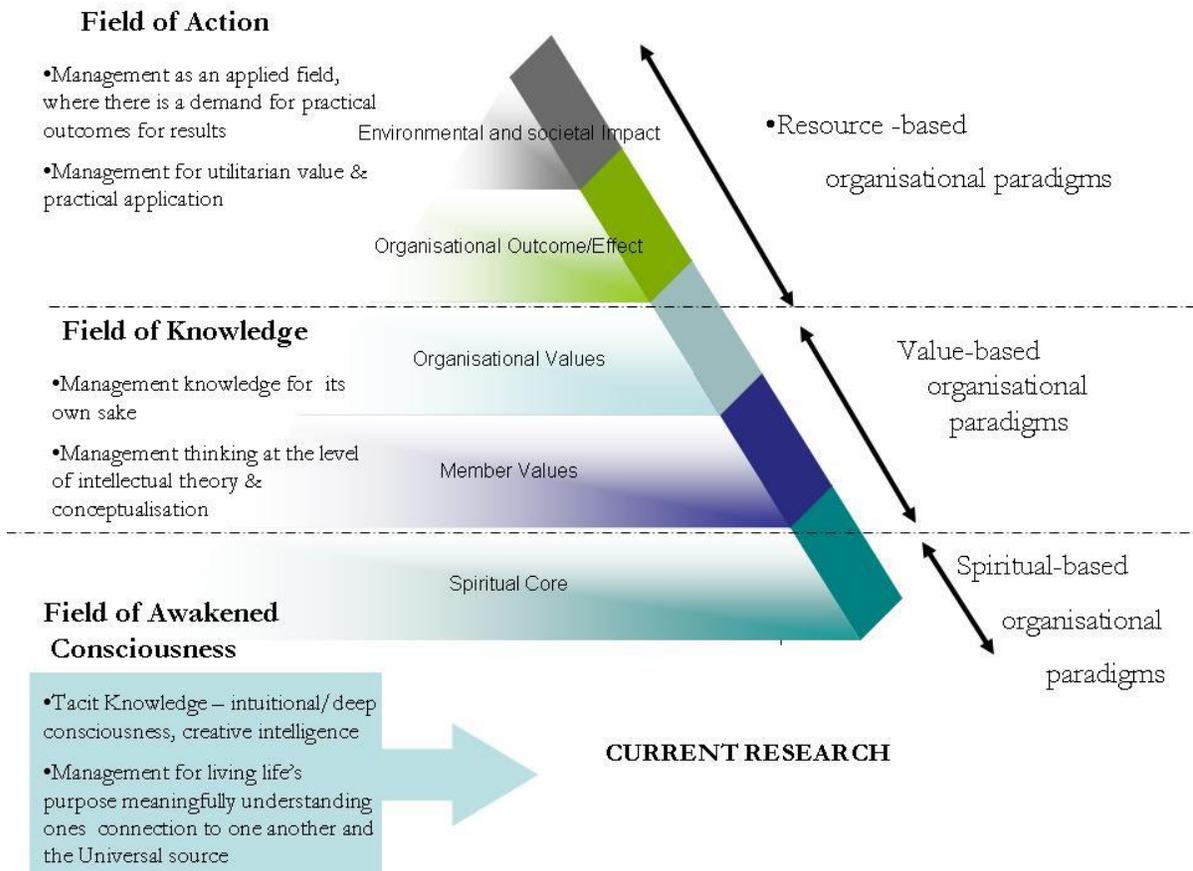


Figure 2.1 Current Research Context

Despite the lack of clear definitions to explain its phenomenon, this research field has developed at a rapid pace. In a complex, sophisticated and confusing world this new trend has grabbed the attention of many.

2.5. DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

In the not too distant past, the concept of spirituality and religion was often kept at a distance from the world of work. However, recent trends to assimilate socio-spiritual paradigms necessitate the need to understand how these concepts have crept into and play a legitimate role in the workplace. Hence, it is important to begin by firstly making a clear distinction of the terms *spirituality* and *religion* as these concepts are too often misunderstood or misrepresented. For the purpose of this study, it is vital to make clear the distinction between ‘spirituality’ and ‘religion’.

The two terms are often as elusive as the concept of God. The intangible nature of spirit or soul or higher self or God, which is a reality beyond the five senses, has been of increasing interest to management scholars and educators. It is important therefore that these two terms are clearly defined to avoid any confusion, as they could mean different things to different people, both in theory and practice.

2.5.1 Defining spirituality

A review of various definitions of spirituality by researchers in the field leads to a variety of definitions with few researchers agreeing on a specific meaning. This is because the topic area is far too subjective and beyond categorisation (Turner, 1999; Neal, 1997; Underhill, 1937). Thus multiplicity of definitions is normal and expected for a field still in its infancy stage of development. Others have even questioned the wisdom of attempting to formulate definitions because it appears that any attempt would at best be inadequate. For instance, Turner argues “as with love, spirituality is multidimensional, and some of its meaning is inevitably lost when attempts are made to capture it in a few words” (1999, p.41) Likewise, Underhill suggest that the ineffability of spirituality precludes definition, “for no words in the human language are adequate or accurate when applied to spiritual realities” (1937, p.23). Others have attempted to characterise and define it at length. Some researchers have looked into the origin of the word spirit, which in its Latin root ‘spiritus’ means “breath of life”. It is defined as “the vital principle or animating force traditionally believed to be within living beings” (Anderson, 2000, p. 16). Elkins Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf & Saunders (1988, p. 8) interpret spiritus as “what is experienced as one pursues ultimate values”. Cowan (1993) defines a spiritual person “as one who is conscious, who is aware of the special breath of life in all creation particularly in humans and in oneself” (p. 59).

Other researchers in pursuit of a definition have found that spirituality is a type of internal feeling of connectedness with one’s complete self (Mitroff & Denton, 1999b; Zinnbauer,

Pargament & Scott, 1999). It seems the modern man, with a greater capacity to learn and make choices, seeks to reassert the need to connect to a higher level of consciousness, often times rejecting the dogmatic knowledge of organised religion and faith. Conger (1994) suggests that spirituality is experienced at the point of transcending oneself. It is an age when people want to experience the soul or spirit for itself. “Fewer today than in the past are convinced by that great traditional, overarching canopy, namely life in the hereafter; many more are convinced by the value of what the here and now, the immediacy of experience, the breadths and depths of consciousness, have to offer” (Heelas, 2002, p. 372)..Some others have defined spirituality in the context of workplace pressures and reality. Many authors describe the turbulence of modern times, producing a general feeling of fear, anxiety and uncertainty amongst people which intensifies their search for meaning in their workplaces. McCormick (1994) defines spirituality as the inner experience of the individual when actively attempting to harmonise his /her actual life with life’s deeper motivation.

Heelas clarifies the key characteristics associated with ‘spirituality’ as “to do with the personal; that which is interior or immanent; that which is one’s experienced relationship with the sacred; and that wisdom or knowledge which derives from that experiences” (2002, p.358)..This author offers an equation for spirituality to mean, “Spirituality = Life = Spirituality = Life” with ‘Life’ to be taken to mean the spiritually informed, personal, intimate, experiential, existential, psychological, etc. An important observation made by Heelas (2002) is that in many parts of the advanced world, such as in countries like Sweden, US and Britain, the numbers involved in institutionalised traditions are relatively small and often declining. Paradoxically, the numbers of atheist or agnostics are also relatively small and not increasing significantly. This implies that, many people who are not religious in a traditional sense do not identify themselves as atheists or agnostics. Hence, they believe in “something”.

According to Woodhead et al. (2002), this is where the “spiritual revolution” is taking place, that is, amongst people who have moved away from institutionalised religious traditions, but who have not become indifferent or atheists or agnostics either. Instead they have turned to New Age spiritualities. Thus there is a tendency for people of a more New-Age disposition to regard spirituality not as religion *per se* but a personal experience of the divine force, energy, spirit or the higher or deep Self. The capitalised “Self” is the imperceptible tacit consciousness quite different to the common “self” denoted as the ego-self-seeking material or physical expression.

The influx of New Age spiritual literature suggests that people in advanced, industrial-commercial society prefer to be spiritual rather than to be religious. It clearly indicates that the terms spirituality and religion are deeply connected. On the other hand, these authors also describe a “spiritual revolution” taking place amongst people who have moved away from institutionalised religious traditions, but who have not become indifferent or atheists or agnostics either. Instead they have turned to New Age spiritualities. These descriptions depict the first view where spirituality is seen as opposed to religiosity, a view predominant in the Western perspective.

The second view is one that sees spirituality and religiosity as highly interconnected concepts. It is tricky to distinguish the two as often in this view spirituality exists within religious frameworks or conversely, religion exists to support spiritual frameworks. This is a more difficult concept to decipher. However, this phenomenon is more widely observable in Eastern cultures where religious beliefs and practices still hold sway. It is fairly obvious that in many parts of the Eastern world, religion forms an integral part of a total culture and society where religion and spirituality are synonymous concepts (Woodhead et al.; 2002; Zinnbauer et al.; 1999; Cash & Gray 2000).

2.5.2 Defining religion

Woodhead, Fletcher, Kawanami and Smith (2002) define religion based on the Concise Oxford Dictionary, which states that religion is a ‘belief in a superhuman controlling power especially in a personal God entitled to obedience and worship; expressions of this in worship; a thing that one is devoted to’. This definition implies that ‘religion’ is very much God-centred. Woodhead et al. also explains that since the 1960’s, ‘religion’ has increasingly come to be seen as that which is “institutionalised; involving prescribed rituals; established ways of believing; the ‘official’, as regulated and transmitted by religious authorities; that which is enshrined in tradition; the ethical commandment of sacred text; the voice of the authority of the transcendent’ (2002,p. 358)..For many others in the modern society, religion has also come to be associated with the formal, dogmatic and hierarchical or the impersonal or the patriarchal.

2.5.3 Why the preference for spirituality over religion?

Heelas (2002) cite the work of two major sociologists of contemporary religion, Robert Wuthnow and Wade Clark Roof, whose research findings based on a large scale study in the US provide supporting evidence of a widespread turn from religion to spirituality. Their study indicate that 73% of those surveyed prefer to use the language of ‘spirituality’ rather than ‘religion’, with one half of the secularist category claiming that God lies within the person, which adds that 79% of Americans are spiritually minded (p. 369). Another interesting observation by Heelas is that while there is evidence of a widespread belief in a life force, a spirit, and a soul, which suggest a spiritual revolution taking place, but there is also emerging evidence that spiritualities of life are also a growing force within the sphere of institutionalised, traditional religion. In other words, the shift from religion to spirituality is even taking place within religious institutions.

While on the one hand spirituality can be considered as a concept opposed to religion, on the other hand spirituality can also be considered inextricably linked within the concept of religion or vice versa, religion within spirituality. These multiple perspectives add to the difficulty of arriving at a distinct definition. Both New Age and theistic spiritualities involve a similar dynamic called the 'higher self'. In New Age spiritualities of life the aim is to perfect one's life by escaping from the stranglehold of the 'lower self' in order to experience a higher plane of being. In theistic spiritualities or among the religious proponents, the 'higher self' is understood to be the 'God' the Supreme and the God within. Both address life by suggesting release from the wrong kind of selfhood (lower self – sinful, fallen or imperfect self) and conversely, promising the best possible life (and self) in the here and now. Both these cater for what many today are most interested in; their own intimate and personal (and their relational) lives (Woodhead, pp. 357-375).

Thus, one may witness within the context of modern workplaces, more so within the Western setting, rather than Eastern setting (where religiously steeped cultural traditions still remain prominent), a phenomena referred to as "detraditionalisation" of religion. This refers to the process whereby faith is lost in the institutional and external elements of a religion, to such an extent where many people do not describe themselves as religious at all. Correspondingly, whilst distancing themselves from religion and tradition, many are happy to speak of themselves as "spiritual". In Mitroff and Denton's (1999b) study among high-level corporate executives in the US looking into spirituality, religion and values at the workplace found that, people appear to differentiate strongly between religion and spirituality whereby religion is seen as intolerant and divisive while spirituality is seen as universal and widely inclusive.

Cash and Gray (2000) concur with the findings of Mitroff and Denton, in their study they found that advocates of spirituality in the work environment in American society often view

spirituality and religion as very different concepts. Cash and Gray's study showed that Americans generally oppose the promotion of formal religion in the workplace while openly defending spirituality as a workplace practice. This occurrence may not be as widely prevalent within the Eastern perspective where religious beliefs and practices still hold sway. Interestingly, the concept of religion vs. spirituality as distinct and separate may not necessarily be a world-wide phenomenon, as one can easily observe many cultural trends in the world where these two concepts are well integrated and thus religion and spirituality remain closely linked and interconnected.

2.5.4 Dominance of religion in some cultures around the world

In many parts of the world, religion forms an integral part of a total culture and society – so much so that it is not even distinguishable as a separate sphere (Woodhead, 2002, p.3). Tobias, Morrison, & Gray (1995) describe the close link between spirituality and religion in an edited interview with 28 spiritual leaders representing various world religions. This shows that for some, religion and spirituality are synonymous concepts. In other words, spirituality in some cultures are experienced and developed through religion. Muslims, historically have belonged overwhelmingly to the non-Western world, estimated worldwide to be in excess of 1 billion, making Islam the largest faith community after Christianity (Waines, 2002). Thus religion remains dominant in much of the Middle-East, North Africa, Central Asia (with the collapse of the former Soviet Union) and parts of South East Asia, such as Indonesia and Malaysia. In Malaysia for example, a multiracial country with a dominant Muslim population, businesses in both the public and private sector openly advocate religious practices, such as having prayer rooms, called “surau” for Muslim devotees to fulfil their ritual prayers during working hours. In other countries, such as India in South Asia, the Hindu religion co-exists well with notions of modernity. For example, traditional Hinduism continues to thrive, ‘rather than fading away, gods

and goddesses have been invigorated by film, television, video and cyberspace” (Smith, 2002). Traditional Hinduism persists in the modern world and Hindu Gurus teaching a wide variety of yoga-based techniques have had an impact not only in India but in the Western world as well. Buddhism is another religious tradition that remains dominant in Southeast and East Asia, such as in Sri Lanka, Tibet, China, Central Asia, South India and Indonesia, and since late twentieth century globalisation, Buddhist traditions have an international presence, becoming significant in North America and Europe (Cantwell & Kawanami, 2002). These authors write that new forms of Buddhism have attracted growing numbers seeking spirituality compatible with contemporary life.

According to Woodhead, Fletcher, Kawanami & Smith (2002) the present dominance of Western writers who set the stage for what is conventional benchmark practice worldwide, can be reasonably questioned. In other words, the Western model of evolution and development may not necessarily serve as a definitive model for modernity, to be imposed on all cultures and societies to emulate. Woodhead et al., argue that a single definition of modernity common to the advanced Western economies may not necessarily depict, the unique modernity experienced in different parts of the world. Neglecting to take into account socio-cultural, political, religious and spiritual characteristics of different parts of the world, of different societies, at different times, may obscure the reality “that there is no universally agreed definition of ‘modernity’”(2002, pp. 3-4). These authors highlight, that once one begins to take a religious and global perspective, simplistic generalisation about modernity begin to fail, and the common Western assumption that all cultures and societies inevitably progress through uniform stages of development from the pre-modern to modern, based on the Western model becomes harder to defend.

2.5.5 Making the distinction between religion and spirituality

Much of the literature derived from Western writers differentiates between these two terms, portraying spirituality as a favoured concept as opposed to religion. Religion is seen as intolerant and divisive while spirituality is seen as universal and widely inclusive (Mitroff and Denton, 1999a; Cash and Gray, 2000). But the discussions above gives reason to question if this was a universal reflection of the phenomenon. The brief look at some of the religious traditions of the world in the previous discussions show that despite secularisation, mass literacy, urbanisation, technological development and growth in communication, religious traditions remain a stronghold in many cultures where there isn't a distinct separation between religion and spirituality as is being observed in many Western context. The religious passions that appears to dominate some societies, undermines the idea that secularisation is an inevitable outcome of modernity and thus it also clarifies that the exclusively spiritual movement is not necessarily a world-wide phenomenon, and that in some parts of the world, religiosity and spirituality remain a synonymous concept. Nevertheless, the distinction made between the concept of spirituality and religion at least offers an understanding of the connectedness of these two concepts, whereby in some cultures, especially of the Eastern traditions, the concepts are used interchangeably. It provides the appreciation for the concept of religion thus allows this study to delve into matters of spirituality especially in cultures deeply entrenched with religious traditions, where the essence of spirituality may indeed be framed within religious beliefs and practice. Henceforth, although most management scholars have argued that these two concepts are different, for the purpose of this study, the definition of spirituality is addressed both within religious traditions and the newer interpretations of spiritualism to analyse the concept of spirituality in the workplace. Zinnbauer, Pargament & Scott (1999) lend support to the idea that the distinction between spirituality and religiosity is artificial and unnecessary. They argue that most of the world's major religions

involve a spiritual dimension, thus the argument for separation between the two concepts, empties religion of its most important components. Also for the purpose of research, it may be too difficult for subjects especially in the Eastern regions to differentiate between what is religious and what is spiritual (Cash & Gray 2000). Thus, in this study, the terms spirituality and religion are used interchangeably as people's spiritual values and meanings sometimes might incorporate religious beliefs as well. On this premise, this study may broach into a range of spiritual or religious information, but its central interest remains in considering their interactions with modern business and the workplace.

2.5.6 Spirituality in the workplace domain

Despite continued polarity on whether spirituality and religion are different or synonymous concepts, this research seeks to explore both views, to understand its intricacies. This research is conducted in both Eastern and Western settings to assess if the two concepts are as contentious in the actual workplace settings as they have been on paper. Both views are included in this study and therefore the definition of spirituality for the purpose of this research considers both religious traditions and newer interpretations of spiritualism. Thus, both the concepts of spirituality and religion are not seen to be mutually exclusive, allowing the research process to broach into a range of spiritual or religious information, considering their interactions within the workplace. Nonetheless, a working definition is needed for the purpose of an academic endeavour. Effort was made to narrow-down the definition from a broad-based transcendental reality, by reviewing literature about spirituality and/or religion within the workplace framework.

This resulted in some specific dimensions. These include writers who have defined spirituality in the context of workplace pressures and reality, i.e. how does it relate to the bottom-line (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Pfeffer, 2003; McLaughlin, 2004; Guillory, 2000). Other authors relate the turbulence of modern times to producing a general

feeling of fear, anxiety uncertainty, and cynicism amongst people, which intensifies their search for meaning in their workplaces (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003). In looking into the future, Inglehart (1997) argues that with economic development, attention shifts from the imperatives of making a living to the project of maximising individual well-being that is a shift from leading materialistic lives to one that focuses on finding meaning and purpose of life. As societies become affluent, people have the time, security and energy to pursue meaning. Therefore, at one end of the spectrum, there are individuals who regard spirituality as a central tenet in one's life, and hence see its expression in the workplace as entirely appropriate (Weston, 2002).

While the literature continues to suggest that organisations pay attention to this phenomenon, much confusion surrounds the ultimate definition of spirituality. However, a few clear dimensions can be distilled from the multiple definitions found in the literature. Pfeffer's (2001) four dimensions of spirituality presented in Table 2.2 below reasonably subsume other definitions and are therefore used in this research to represent the main dimensions of spirituality for the context of the workplace environment.

Four Fundamental Dimensions of Spirituality	
1.	Spirituality is about seeking one's full potential to gain self-mastery.
2.	Spirituality seeks a social meaning or value in life, a sense of meaning and purpose beyond selfish ego needs.
3.	Spirituality seeks a sense of connectedness with other human beings and all creations, (and to some, a personal relationship with the divine force, called God or the Universe, the Supreme etc.), to exist in harmony and balance.
4.	Spirituality seeks integration between the inner and outer life, to be able to express and live consistent with one's basic beliefs and self-concept.

Table 2.2 Pfeffer's (2001) Four Fundamental Dimensions of Spirituality

Some Management texts have already begun to include uncommon terminology such as "Workplace Spirituality" in their table of contents. These authors broadly define workplace spirituality as "a recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work

that takes place in the context of community” (see Robbins, Bergman, Stag and Coulter, 2003, p. 60), explaining that despite the words workplace and spirituality appearing incongruous, the trend to explore spirituality is a reflection of broader trends in society where people are searching for a deeper understanding of who they are and why they are here on earth. According to these authors, the search for meaning in their lives and that they are part of something greater than themselves is partly due to the fact that structures in society such as family and community have failed to give them meaning, fulfilment and a sense of connectedness. Thus, people are turning to the workplace where they spend a significant portion of their lives to seek those things missing from other sources. Furthermore, the nature of work described with change and environmental uncertainty, generally contributes to anxiety levels of people. Practicing spirituality in whatever ways they are comfortable provides employees with a sense of calm, belonging, connection, fulfilment and meaning (Robbins et al., 2003). The following section provides further evidence as to why spirituality is gaining momentum in the business management domain.

2.6 WHY SPIRITUALITY IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT IS GAINING MOMENTUM?

In the past, many studies have appeared in management literature addressing the importance of tending to intellectual and emotional needs of employees. For long, it was believed that success in the workplace depends on IQ. In the late 1980’s, Mayer and Salovey(1993) coined the terms “Emotional Intelligence” which was later adapted by Goleman (1996), suggesting that intelligence quotient (IQ) only accounts for 20 percent of a person’s success in life and the remaining 80 per cent attributed to emotional intelligence (EQ).Singh (2007 reflected on this changing yardstick for success at the workplace. Generally, spiritual needs had been largely ignored or relegated to be a factor appropriate for expression only outside of the workplace. Secularisation of the business environment was seen as an unspoken necessity to maintain business sense and focus.

More recently however, the spiritual dimension, especially in the USA and Canada has been receiving a lot of attention in popular literature. Ashmos & Duchon (2000) cite a number of reasons for the newfound interest in spirituality in the workplace in the USA. Some of the reasons relate to the uncertainty of the times, with business environments experiencing corporate downsizing, reengineering and restructuring with massive layoffs, resulted in demoralisation and questioning of the meaning of work. The study by Mitroff & Denton (1999b) indicated that employees expect organizations to cultivate some type of spirituality within their members to produce high quality products and services. This ground-breaking study by Mitroff and Denton, spurred a further surge of interest to discover if spirituality has the profound potential to contribute to the field of business management, and beyond that towards humanity as a whole. These authors went as far as to suggest “if organisations are to survive, let alone prosper, then frankly we see no alternative to their becoming spiritual” (p. 168), hence suggesting that the spiritual dimensions provide benefits to the workplace environment, organisation performance, leadership styles and management function.

2.6.1 Spirituality and its links to values and ethics

The increasing reference to ‘values’ and ‘ethics’ in business suggest that organizations are keen to consider the ‘triple-bottom-line’, and this interest has helped propel spirituality in the workplace as a valid area of interest. To this effect many writers have indicated that managers, employees and researchers are looking into the relationship of spirituality to the business organisation and its stakeholders (Boyle & Healy, 2003; Hansen, 2001; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Conger 1994; Dehler and Walsh, 1994). Hence, it is fast gaining recognition both among academic scholars and business practitioners, seeking to establish that spirituality has a positive impact on the workplace, which in turn may lead to good outcomes for organizations and its members.

2.6.2 Spirituality and search for meaning

Frankl (1984) wrote that one's search for meaning in life is the primary motivational source, and if this intrinsic need is not addressed, it could lead to what he terms as the 'existential vacuum' or the feeling of inner emptiness when a person's life is devoid of meaning. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) observe that organisations are increasingly becoming the place where employees operationalise their search for meaning. They define workplace spirituality as "a framework of organisational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy (p.13)." Similarly, other writers contend with this notion that the workplace is where most people search and find their sense of meaning considering that many hours of a person's life is spent at work. Hence, the workplace assumes a significant role in fulfilling the needs for wholeness and integration (Neal, 1999; Kahnweiler & Otte, 1997; Neck & Milliman, 1994).

2.6.3 Spirituality as a legitimate field of scientific inquiry

A key indicator of this acceptance of spirituality in business management was when in the year 2000, The Board of the Academy of Management, approved the "Management, Spirituality and Religion (MSR) Interest Group" (Robbins, 2000). The proposal for such an institutional arrangement was to focus on the study of the relationship and relevance of spirituality and religion for management and organizations. Broadly, this interest group was to represent various perspectives on spiritual life and religion as they relate to work, management, leadership, organizations and capitalism. While the new interest group highlighted various benefits of such an institution within the Academy, more than a decade on, a cautious stance lingers as the MSR interest group has yet to make the cut as a full-fledged Division in the Academy. This caution clearly indicates a subtle doubt in scholarly circles, if the area of spirituality and religion in

management will become established as a discipline within management. Despite this prudence, publications in this field, both scholarly and in the popular press, grows unabated.

2.6.4 Spirituality and organisational life

Some writers have written on specific dimensional relationships of spirituality to organisational life. For instance, (Konz & Ryan 1999; Wilson, Hacker & Johnston, 1999; Brandt, 1996) saw spirituality as a factor for organisational development and transformation. Relatedly, some authors focussed on the impact of spirituality on organisational life of individuals (Burack, 1999; King & Nicol, 1998, 1999; Nadesan 1999; Neck & Milliman 1994). Then, there are writers who looked into more specific subjects within the management discipline such as leadership (Fry, 2003, 2005a; Driscoll & Mckee 2007; Morris, Brotheridge & Urbanski, 2005; Cacioppe, 2000; Renesch, 1992), meaning and suffering (Driver; 2007), work commitment and motivation and wellness (De Klerk, 2005; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004), performance and job satisfaction (Jaworski, 1997; Turner 1999), workplace stress (Alexander, DeArmond, Heaton Stevens & Schmidt-Wilk, 2004; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). A review of the literature from various dimensions of organisational life makes clear the growing interest in spirituality as a relevant dimension of management.

2.6.5 Spirituality as the tacit foundation in the origins of business

Stackhouse (2002) calls attention to the historical perspectives of modern business, suggesting that scholars studying economic and social conditions often lack a deep historical sense, ignoring social history that shaped them arguing that modern business life is not merely driven by capitalist, materialist motivations. Stackhouse insist that in truth, modern capitalistic business environments were historically shaped and constructed by the moral and spiritual energies of a vibrant, pluralistic social fabric, laden with religious and ethical influences.

Stackhouse (2002, 2003) reiterates social scientists, who think that in their work they can dispense with religious influences, or safely confine them to the privacy of individual hearts, must face this reality and not arbitrarily rule it out of their purview. This author cites other authors such as Friedman (1999) who stated that “we cannot understand the present globalisation of the economy if we do not understand its moral and spiritual roots” and also Weber (1963) who in *The Sociology of Religion* wrote about the economic consequence of the Protestant “work ethic”, an idea furthered by Merton (1990) who suggested that Protestant influence not just shaped the celebrated work ethics of modern management but also some dimensions of science.

Furthermore, Tracey (2012) points out that with the notable exception of Western Europe, much of the world, citing (Berger, 2001, p. 445) “is as religious as it has ever been, and in some places more religious than ever”. Tracey, also believes that classical sociological writers such as Marx, Weber and Durkheim continue to offer relevant insights for the wave of current research interest in the relationship between religion and organisation, concluding that “there is an overwhelming focus on Western Christianity, with relatively little having been written on other religions and only limited focus on countries outside North America and Europe” (2012, p.124). Kriger and Seng (2005) discuss the historical cultural orientations of 5 different religions and its modern day relevance to leadership suggesting that some ancient text from the ancient religious traditions have highly relevant constructs to offer the research and conceptual efforts to advance spirituality in the workplace. They include in their discussions, Islam’s Sufism citing Islamic literature such as Rumi (1207-1273) and Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), in Judaism the Cabbalistic interpretation of the Torah as early as the 17th and 18th century, the Hindu and Buddhist traditions that pre-dates most other religious traditions such as the advaita non-dual teachings of Adi Shankara (788-820 A.D), and Buddhist teachings between 250 B.C.- 80 B.C. Kriger and Seng posit that underlying the five religious traditons has a non-dual orientation that human

beings can reach the ultimate spiritual aspiration “self-realisation, a state of non-separation with the ultimate Truth or God”.(2005,p.796).

Ottoway (2003) reviewed the concept of spirituality of work in its historical and current use, pointing out that much of the Western thought is based on the Hebrew Christian tradition. Turner (2011) provides a discursive on the unique historical and comparative analysis of the place of religion in the emergence of modern secular society. These authors provide a critical link into the distant past of the evolutionary history of management theory and practice, plainly making a case that the origins of the modern corporations was indeed rooted in Western and Eastern religious value systems of the historical past. Davie (2004) in her new approaches to the sociology of religion, highlights that the Western version of modernity particularly of the European flavour where there is comparative secularity, is simply one form of modernity among many in the modern world. Such views offer support for this study which explores some Eastern viewpoints recognising that conceptual tools that emerge predominantly from Western perspectives may not be appropriate elsewhere.

In discussing managers and people within modern day corporations, Stackhouse (2002) indicate that the moral and spiritual roots of why they do what they do have become obscured, even though there is evidence that historically, these global corporations were shaped and nurtured by religious traditions despite the secular character they portray today. At some point during this evolutionary history, particularly after the Scientific Revolution, as technology revolutionised practically all aspects of modern life, secularist ideas took dominion. This research returns to the roots, not to glorify the past contributions of religious and spiritual traditions, but to re-connect with obscured and lost groundings of these dimensions, which permeate so-called modern “secular” business enterprises. Weston (2002) who examined the increasing interest in workplace spirituality in New Zealand cites in her study that every organisation has spirituality,

whether the organisation realises it or not. This reference to spirituality as a tacit presence in organisations is being valued by business practitioners as they begin to appreciate its relevance in modern times. According to Berman, Down and Hill (2002), as a tacit dimension spirituality as an “inner world” experience is increasingly acknowledged because tacit knowledge is an important source of creativity that fuels innovation, a competitive advantage for firms (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998).

2.7. PROFILE OF THE BUSINESS LEADER FOR THE FUTURE

The changing role of leaders is well-documented and today terms such as charismatic (Shamir, House & Arthur 1993; Bass, 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1987,1988,1994), transformational (Hunt, 1999; Dvir, Eden, Avolio & Shamir, 2002), visionary (Jones, 1995), servant (Greenleaf, 1977; Nanus, 1992; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002) and spiritual (DePree 1989; Hawley,1993; Fairholm, 1997; Fry, 2003; Klenke, 2003) leadership are now widely used. The authenticity and spirit of a leader provides the basis upon which organisational values are formed, which to a large degree regulates day-to-day behaviour and activity at the workplace (Moxley, 2000). The demand on leaders to be able to mind both their bottom line and maintain an active social and environmental agenda appears to be the new KPI for successful leaders in business (Bass, 2000; Kurth 2003, McLaughlin, 2004).

Evidence is surfacing however, to suggest that spirituality should be integrated into the financial, social and environmental business agenda (Fox, 1994) In organisations where individual and collective spirituality are encouraged, and spiritual development “with higher purposes that are human, emotional and altruistic” (Miller, 1984, p.44), employees are inspired and energized based on meaning and purpose rather than reward and security (Konz & Ryan, 1999), thus transcending self-interest for the welfare of organisational members (Dehler & Walsh, 1994). In the business environment dominated by capitalistic structures, many people become

disillusioned by the workplace routines and relationships leading to a sense of meaninglessness or emptiness. It is common to observe people compartmentalising their lives, living part of their lives in conformance to rational principles such as those required in the workplace, while concurrently living another aspect of their lives conforming to non-rational values or beliefs, such as when participating in religious or spiritual rituals and rites. McCormick (1994) defines spirituality as the inner experience of the individual when actively attempting to harmonise his/her actual life with life's deeper motivation. The contradictions, which often exist between the private life of an individual and one's life as a member of the workplace creates an endless battle within oneself and one's relationships. Some progressive and mature business enterprises are already experimenting with newer ways of leading. Big firms like 3M, GE, IBM, Walt Disney, HP, The Body Shop and others lead on value-based principles centred on core values and a sense of purpose beyond just making money. These organisations are showcasing a combination of traditional and non-traditional work practices, settings and locations based on the assumption that work and personal life are not competing priorities but complementary ones (Friedman, Christensen and Degroot, 1998). Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, (2003) provide compelling discussions on the influence of spirituality to help leaders perceive right from wrong in their business activities.

2.7.1 The new crossroad for managers and leaders

Often business organisations are spoken of as if they are living, breathing entities. In truth, they are as moral, ethical, evolved, and successful as the individuals who run them. Despite making impressionable inroads into understanding the psyche of the human spirit at work, business environments tended to divorce man as a spiritual and social being from his productive role at the workplace, reaffirming that one's spiritual and personal life should reside outside the workplace. Yet, recent studies as discussed in this chapter indicate that trends are changing. As

the workplace evolves to reflect the diversity within society, a variety of ingrained spiritual beliefs and practices, which in the past did not enjoy freedom of expression in the workplace, are emerging to be a subject of interest. Ultimately this issue may be seen to manifest in the degree of trust, ethics and social responsibility that exist between managers and employees and their stakeholders in all areas of organisational activity and dealings.

2.7.2 Spirituality and the new leadership challenge

Traditional managers and leaders tend to dismiss the notion of spirituality having any relevance in the workplace, believing that its place belongs in organised religion outside of the working lives of people. Secretan (1997) challenges that this belief, does not square with the experience of millions of uninspired workers who yearn for a new generation of evolving leaders whom he suggest should assume the true role as custodians of the human spirit. Many outstanding scholars and practitioners believe that the roots of effective leadership are grounded in the spiritual dimension of the individual leader (Mitroff & Denton, 1999a; Conger 1994; Hawley, 1993). Kanungo & Mendonca (1994) developed a model to support their theoretical argument that the spirituality of individual leaders is the foundation of effective transformational leadership. According to Ryan & Leo (2000), the search for a new leadership paradigm in management is a call to foster the human spiritual dimension which according to them represents the deepest concerns and values of everyone in the enterprise. In his book on spiritual leadership, Fairholm observes that the 21st century is seeing leaders acquiring a new language, one where it is OK to use all of the operative “S” words of soul, sacred, spirit and sin as well as structure, strategy and system” (1997, p. 185)..In a study with mid and senior-level executives, Ashar & Lane-Maher (2004) found, contrary to their expectations, that participants would define success in materialistic (money, positional power and status symbol) terms, they instead used terms such as “being connected, balance and wholeness to define and describe success. Bell and Taylor

(2004) point out that in recent years management thinking has sought to emphasise the development of creative, visionary and intuitive practices as a means of coping with contemporary organisational life citing many influential writers as having questioned the earlier rational paradigms. Delving into the full changing spectrum of the human factor i.e. the psychological, socio-physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels of a person may provide a clearer understanding of the inner desires, intentions, motivations and identifications of the human subject. The lack of this knowledge as to what is the true nature of the human workforce persists as difficult and huge challenges to motivate others.

Part of the problem is that the managers play a dual role. They are the drivers and facilitators of change in organisations while they themselves are changing within through deep personal experiences associated with their own personal journey into discovering their own identity or sense of self. Maslow (1943) named this business of self-discovery, “*self-actualisation*”. Maslow was perhaps the first to propose a theory of human motivation that went beyond the simpler models of scientific management and behaviourist writers, by giving emphasis to the role of unconscious motives. He also defended his concept of “personology”, the study of the whole person (Maslow & Lowry 1968). Maslow’s work, which is extensively used in management literature, is a good starting point to further research in this subject area.

In alignment with Burack’s (1999) concept of spirituality in the workplace, this study acknowledges that key managers and leaders of an organisation play an important role because spirituality in the workplace is communicated and reinforced through them. They may use a variety of organisational dimensions such as culture (symbols, rituals and rites), policies, work designs and reward systems, among other factors in establishing a climate of high integrity, trust, faith, justice and respect while remaining sensitive to the interest of employees and stakeholders in all earnestness.

2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher would like to draw attention to the fact that this research commenced as a Masters level study and later upgraded to a doctoral study over ten year ago. This field of Spirituality in the Workplace was at that point at its early infancy and as such theoretical frameworks of this subject area at that time, was fairly limited. This might reflect as a demerit in the presentation of this literature review that commenced in the early years of 2002/2003. At that juncture, literature in this field was fairly constrained with few top-tiered journals addressing this field. It is pointed out that an attempt is made to incorporate more of the current literature later in the discussion chapters to offset this limitation in this current chapter. Thus, the researcher acknowledges that the theoretical landscape within this discipline has expanded since the researcher commenced this project. The relevant framework at that time was mainly in the work of Fry (2003) who published his causal theory of spiritual leadership in the *Leadership Quarterly*. In his theoretical framework, Fry incorporated values such as vision, hope, faith, altruistic love and spiritual survival as a model for high levels of organisational commitment and productivity. Since 2004, the first volume and issue of the *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* commenced and many more main stream journals began to publish articles on spirituality in business management, producing contemporary models of leadership incorporating spirituality. Reave (2005), in a review of over 150 studies, show a clear consistency between spiritual values and practices and overall leadership effectiveness. Similarly Dent, Higgins, & Wharff (2005) in their empirical review of definitions, distinctions, and embedded assumptions of spirituality and leadership propose that the spiritual domain is an integral component of leadership.

More recently, Karakas (2010a) reviewed literature on spirituality and performance and in another article develop an integral framework for analyzing and capturing diverse forms of value compasses of leaders in organizations. In his second article Karakas (2010b) presents his concept

of nine spiritual anchors as patterns of deeply held motives, values and attitudes, based on his study of individuals who held beliefs based on the Sufi tradition, direct meaning, wholeness and connectedness with their associates through these deeply held spiritual anchors. All these theoretical frameworks have a common theme suggesting that core spiritual values of leaders are communicated in the workplace through a variety of tacit and explicit actions and expressions. These ideas from the literature review combined with the theoretical frameworks of Systems and Chaos Theories (discussed in Chapter 3) and Wilber's Model of Integral Spirituality (2006), discussed in Chapter 4, form the relevant theoretical underpinnings of this study.

2.9 SUMMARY

The review of literature in this chapter has provided some background and current insight into issues relating to managing and leading in the current era. Reasons underlying paradigm shifts in management and factors for Western dominance in the mainstream research on spirituality were discussed. The distinction between spirituality and religiosity was made defining their differences and also the strong links between the two concepts were explained. The chapter then reviewed the reasons for a flourishing interest in the field of workplace spirituality and considered the implication of spirituality in the context of workplace management and leadership, making a case for spiritually-inspired leaders for the modern era. Finally, this chapter highlighted several theoretical and conceptual frameworks used as a foundation for theory building within the context of the current study. The next chapter provides an overview of the research methodology and research design employed in this study and elaborates further on the conceptual frameworks of systems and chaos theories to represent the dynamics of the workplace in the modern era. The next chapter also presents the specific research questions that were developed through the discoveries of the preliminary phase.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The 'highest' values; the spiritual life, the highest aspirations of mankind are therefore proper subjects for scientific study and research.

Abraham Maslow

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the rationale for the way this social scientific research was designed to investigate if the tacit innermost spiritual values of business leaders influence their role at the workplace where volatile and constantly changing business environment pose various leadership challenges. The chapter is intended to provide an overview of the various stages of the research project. It commences with Section 3.2 that presents the overall research design with sub-sections covering the research philosophy, approach and strategy adopted in this study. It covers discussions on the epistemological divide between the positivist and constructionist traditions that presents the qualitative-quantitative tensions from which a case is made for the interpretative research paradigm as a suitable to investigate this tacit subjective topic on spirituality within the context of social-political and cultural environments of the research subjects. It warrants an exploratory qualitative approach based on theoretical underpinnings of systems and chaos theory for theory building. This section also discusses the merits of a heuristic inquiry as methodological framework highly suitable for studying the tacit subject of spirituality describing the systematic six step phases of the Heuristics research process as listed below:

1. Initial engagement
2. Immersion
3. Incubation

4. Illumination
5. Explication
6. Creative synthesis

This is followed by an overview of the research design in Section 3.3 describing the three main phases; Preliminary, Phase I and Phase II. Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 explain the methods for sampling, data collection and data analysis. Finally Section 3.6 and 3.7 discusses issues concerning reliability, validity and bias.

3.2. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

3.2.1 Constructivism versus positivism

The two major epistemological orientations in social science research are the positivist and constructionist also known as interpretive traditions. Thomas (2004) clarifies that the key difference between these views is primarily drawn from their different conceptions of human beings and how human behaviour is to be understood. In brief, positivism is equated to knowledge of the observable phenomena, treating human beings as objects similar to other objects in the natural world. The positivist approach posits there is a set reality that is both knowable and independent of the researcher.

Constructivists on the other hand argue that human beings are different to other entities in the universe as humans live in a meaningful way, constructing meaning and values in symbolic exchanges. Constructivism holds that knowledge is constructed by the individual as he or she interacts with the environment and attempts to make sense of it. In their critique on paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences, Lincoln and Guba (2000) analyse the suitability of various paradigms (positivism, post positivism, critical theory and constructivism) to current thought and important issues emerging in the present world. These authors propose that

“the meaning-making, the sense-making and attributional activities that shape action (or inaction)” (2000, p.169) of groups and individuals in a social phenomena is the central interest of constructivist. Guba & Lincoln (1989) suggest a key primary assumption of constructivism is that “truth” is in the consensus between the informed and the sophisticated constructors and is not a matter of correspondence with objective reality. In other words no truth in any absolute sense is possible as everything is socially constructed. On this count, this study of spiritual beliefs and experiences of business leaders as they relate to workplace values and relations appear to be more strongly rooted in the tradition of constructivism which sees reality as a social construct (Guba, 1991). Other researchers studying the phenomenon of spirituality and religion in the workplace have also highlighted the relevance of the constructivist approach (Fernando and Jackson, 2006).

For this research, the philosophical foundations of constructivism clearly provide a strong epistemological basis to analyse the relationship of the self (spiritually inspired business leaders) and the world (their workplace). As the positivist and constructivist epistemological philosophy underpin the traditional divide between quantitative and qualitative research, the next section briefly describes the quantitative-qualitative differences and tensions, before arguing the merits of a qualitative approach for this research project.

3.2.2 Quantitative versus qualitative

The differences between quantitative and qualitative research not only lie in the methods themselves but for the most part also in their philosophical orientation towards the objects of study. The quantitative approach has been recognised as a derivative of the well-established scientific school which has its source from the objectivist, empiricist, rationalist, positivist tradition. It is often referred to as the “hard sciences” (Kvale, 1996; Lindlof, 1995; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Implicit in its philosophical framework is the assumption that an objective world exists and it can be systematically and rationally studied through the use of empirical research

methods. Quantitative research claims to identify factors which affect a variable such as achievement or motivation, and to produce results which can be generalized to a broader population. Such research does not answer the question *why* someone works or behaves the way they do, it only compares quantitative measures. Also inherent to the quantitative paradigm is the idea that the researcher should observe a somewhat distant, detached, neutral and objective position, in controlled conditions, to be able to explain reality (Guba, 1991).

In the research area of spirituality there are researchers who have employed quantitative methods focused on developing and evaluating a variety of measurement scales such as The Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs (SIB) Scale Spiritual Well-being (SWB) Scale as discussed by Fornaciari, Sherlock, Ritchie, & Dean (2005) in their analysis of scale development practices in the measurement of spirituality. Others like Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson (2003) have used the quantitative methods to provide empirical assessment on the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee work attitude variables, while King and Williamson (2005) tested the link between religiosity and job satisfaction. Quantitative methods such as statistical data and surveys are useful tools for drawing generalised outcomes and draw general conclusions however they have significant limitations when it comes to capturing subtleties that can provide deep insight on a tacit phenomenon such as spirituality.

On the other hand, the qualitative humanistic, interpretive, phenomenological approach has its roots in the ancient traditions of Socrates, the Greek thinker whose, "Socratic Method" involved asking probing questions about human behaviour and attitudes which would eventually lead to the truth. The Socratic form of inquiry into social phenomena laid the early foundations for Western philosophical thought (Lindlof, 1995). However, it was the work of Thomas Kuhn's 1962 landmark book *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, which is to be credited for transforming the image of science by making it exciting and emphasizing that it is a social

process in addition to being a rational one (Kuhn, 1996). The goals of qualitative research are consistent with a constructivist philosophy. Creswell (1994, p.1) defined qualitative study as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting”. Qualitative research seeks to describe a situation in detail, to examine it for patterns, to look for the reasons why something or someone behaves in a certain way or believes a certain thing.

The exploration of tacit knowledge - the spiritual values held by research participants - cannot be observed explicitly. However, their assertions or expressions in the form of subjective and relative personal or workplace values or behaviour represent observable phenomena. To summarise, whilst the positivist approach can describe the observable actions of business leaders drawing cause-effect relationships at best, the constructionist approach helps further explain why leaders might act the way they do. Using a constructivist approach Bolman & Deal (1991) suggest that leaders must be passionately committed to their principles, but flexible in understanding and responding to the events, situation, and contexts around them that is constantly shifting and changing. Dickson, Den Hartog and Mitchelson (2003) describe how since 1996 there has been a decline in the quest for universal leadership principles and a rise in awareness of differences, often applying Hofstede’s dimension of culture, many studies reveal unique ways that leadership is defined among Eastern (collective, holistic, spirituality based) and Western cultures (hierarchical, authority based, and individualistic). Kezar (2004) argues that social constructivists, constructivists, and post-modernists take a non-essentialist view that leadership is shaped by local conditions, individual backgrounds/experience, and circumstances and upon reflecting on these experiences they construct and generate their own "rules" and "mental models". As a logical consequence it follows through that a leader’s experiences of reality would

include social and cultural constructions, including gender, race, religion and other socio-cultural constructs (Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum, 1989; Kezar, 2001). These viewpoints suggest that leadership is an art and cannot be exact or precise. Such differences among leaders' beliefs, values and behaviour can only be finely understood when seen from a constructivist lens.

Thus it is not surprising to find the large majority of research in the area of spirituality and leadership employ qualitative techniques to discuss subjective concepts such as Ryan (2000) who investigates Islamic values and moral considerations for leadership incorporating the spiritual dimension. Similarly, Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2005) analyses how organisations interface with religion. While many others in the field are focussed on developing theoretical or conceptual frameworks for facilitating or integrating spirituality in the workplace (Hicks, 2002; Ashar and Maher, 2004; Bell and Taylor, 2004; Singhal & Chateerji, 2006 Marques, 2008; Gotsis, & Kortezi, 2008). All these scholarly work adopt a constructive interpretive approach clearly preferring the qualitative over the quantitative methods. The qualitative technique approach contributes to understanding “how” people conceptualise spirituality in the work place. For example, spirituality is concerned with the basic desire to find meaning and purpose in one's life as suggested by Mitroff and Denton (1999a).

A critical part of this research was to engage closely with participants to establish sufficient trust to enable participants to reveal information which might be considered extremely personal and confidential to the informants. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) note that the qualitative researcher looks at settings and people holistically, without reducing them to variables. They also caution that researchers need to be sensitive to their effects on the people they study, preferably in a naturalistic environment suggesting “researchers must empathize and identify with the people they study to understand them from their subjects' frame of reference” (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984 p.6). This approach allows the researcher to examine spirituality from the perceptual level of

organizational members, including business leaders/ managers and their employees and/or others associated to the primary informants. For this reason the qualitative method is a suitable research strategy particularly because, spirituality as a subject of inquiry is highly subjective and needs to be contextualised to the experience of the informants based on their own individual perception and interpretations.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.3.1 Exploratory research

Spirituality is very much an “inner world” experience for research subjects, often involving very personal internal experiences normally not available to conscious awareness, and for this reason is described by Polanyi (1967) as tacit knowledge or the tacit dimension. Within the business tacit aspects such as inner dimensions of meaning, purpose and sense-making of work are being increasingly acknowledged and considered (Baumard, 1999; Berman, Down & Hill, 2002). Leonard & Sensiper (1998) suggest that tacit knowledge can also be a source of competitive advantage and innovation for firms as it is the centre from which creative energy is thought to flow. They conclude “we shall have to confront in the world of business the delicate, imposing task known best to poets and artist – expressing enough of the inexpressible” (p.27). The extremely personal, subjective and complex nature of this research field locates it within the scope of exploratory research. Ahuja (2005) defines research as “a careful and exhaustive investigation of a phenomenon with an objective for advancing knowledge” (p.19) and exploratory research is said to be an attempt “to gain better understanding of different dimensions of the problem” (p.32).

Spirituality in the business domain has started to gain interest and credibility with increasing levels of academic publications; however it remains a subject area that has more questions than answers. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter the distinction between

spirituality and religion in the corporate context is still widely debated (Brandt, 1996; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). In such instances where variables are not easily identifiable, and lack of clear theories and/or need for developing new theories is evident, Creswell (1998) suggests an exploratory approach would be suitable. Exploratory research typically aims to obtain a better understanding of a concept and clarifies the qualities or characteristics associated with an object or topic (Zikmund, 1991). The great advantage of exploratory research is that it is flexible and adaptable to change as new data or new insights occur during the fieldwork. This does not mean total absence of direction to the enquiry but rather a broad initial focus may become progressively narrower as the research progresses.

3.3.2 Theory building

Jensen (1998) explains that a major challenge facing social scientists is the development of a body of theory to explain why organizations take the form they do and why they behave as they do. Lewin's (1945) famous quote that "nothing is so practical as a good theory (p.129)" is relevant at this a point in time when business organisations are facing major upheavals and constant change that it is almost impossible to make rational predictions about what's next. According to Van de Ven (1989) a good theory must be practical because it ought to advance knowledge in a scientific discipline, guides research towards crucial questions and enlightens the profession of management. For these reasons, this research evaluated several qualitative approaches from the rich variety of available methods to choose from. Ranging from phenomenology, ethnomethodology, ethnography, heuristics, critical theory, grounded theory, systems theory and feminist inquiry (Patton, 2002), each of these qualitative frameworks allows the researcher to focus on a particular aspect of human experience. According to Patton, they also demonstrate that a single phenomenon can be studied using multiple qualitative frameworks, hence it demands that the researcher be clear on the different options available and "the

implications of the various perspectives on the study focus, data collection, field work and analysis” (2002, p.131). Bearing this caution in mind, four were considered to be most relevant for theory building in this study as discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.3.2.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology seeks to capture the “lived experience” of research participants and phenomenologists agree that each individual has his or her own reality. This main feature of phenomenology is pertinent, particularly because the current research is conducted in two distinctive cultures of the east and the west where the value of cultural differences of lived space (spatiality) bears a strong impact on individual experiences. The other features of lived body (corporeality) lived human relationships (relationality) and lived time (temporality) as discussed in Van Manen (1990) are all significant issues consistent to the current study. However, Douglass and Moustakas’s (1985, p.43) contrast of the phenomenological approach with heuristics highlights the restrictions posed by this method of inquiry. It indicates that the phenomenological approach limits the level of involvement required between researcher and research participant, encouraging a kind of detachment from the phenomenon being investigated, while heuristics emphasizes connectedness and relationships. Secondly, while phenomenology permits the researcher to conclude with definitive descriptions of the structure of experiences, heuristics leads to depictions of essential meanings. Thirdly, whereas phenomenological research concludes with a distilled structure of experiences, heuristics may involve reintegration of derived knowledge, an act of creative discovery that includes a synthesis with intuition and tacit understanding. Finally, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) believe phenomenology loses the persons in the process of descriptive analysis while in heuristics the research participants remain visible in the examination of the data. They conclude that phenomenology ends with the essence of experience while heuristics retains the essence of the person in experience.

3.3.2.2 Grounded theory

Grounded theory, an inductive technique developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is said to be especially suited for areas where there is minimal knowledge of a phenomenon or when a new perspective on everyday phenomena is required (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Strauss and Corbin 1994, 1998). Theory is generated during the research process while collecting, analysing and simultaneously forming theory. An important methodological technique in grounded theory methodology according to Strauss (1987) is the constant comparative process by careful analysis of data that involves examining field notes, study of transcribed interviews, coding and categorising by comparing data piece by piece at all stages and ultimately constructing a theory. Despite being a popular qualitative method, a more structured approach in formulating a fairly well-defined research problem at the start of the research was preferred. At issue was how much the review of literature could be used prior to entering the field. Also problematic was that the researcher is assumed to be simultaneously objective and subjective when using grounded theory (Charmaz, 1990) which also required the researcher to maintain a degree of detached closeness and also be “independent from the researched” (Blaikie, 1993). All posed challenges for the researcher in this study because of the need to maintain closeness with participants in order for them to feel comfortable to disclose their personal views on spirituality.

3.2.2.3 Ethnography

Ethnographic research explores phenomena within cultural contexts from emic perspectives, or from the perspective of the members of the cultural groups involved (Morse & Richards, 2002). The possibility of an ethnographic approach was considered given the fact that this research was conducted in two distinct cultural settings. Although a cross-cultural sample of western and eastern subjects were under study, the primary focus of this research was more to do with the internal awareness and value differences of individual subjects in two distinct western and eastern

cultural settings. Therefore the impact of culture while relevant was not central to the research question. While elements of ethnographic methods might be relevant, overall this approach which required long periods in the field observing and actively participating in cultural groups as an observer participant was not practical for the study of research participants in busy business environments. Additionally, obtaining access to business settings was problematic when dealing with such executives and the research sometimes could only be conducted via teleconference due to distance and time constraints. These impracticalities rendered the ethnographic approach unsuitable for this study.

3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY

To maintain creativity and rigour, Flick (2008) notes that in qualitative research, the researcher needs to remain intuitive and creative in the field through contact with research participants, and consequently consider which method of triangulation would secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. With this counsel in mind and guided by the research objectives, several qualitative methods were finally utilized in this research as discussed below.

3.4.1 Systems and chaos theory

The theoretical underpinnings of both systems and chaos theory were found to be relevant and useful for theory building. This section discusses the merits of both, first discussing systems followed by chaos theory. Originally proposed by biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in the field of organism psychology as open systems theory, systems theory came to pervade many disciplines, including business and management (Flood, 2001). Patton (2002) suggests that the systems view is becoming increasingly important in dealing with and understanding real-world complexities, viewing things as whole entities embedded in context and in still larger. A systems

view proved to be useful when illustrating the interconnectedness and interdependence of environmental, organisational, and individual relationships (see Figure 3.1).

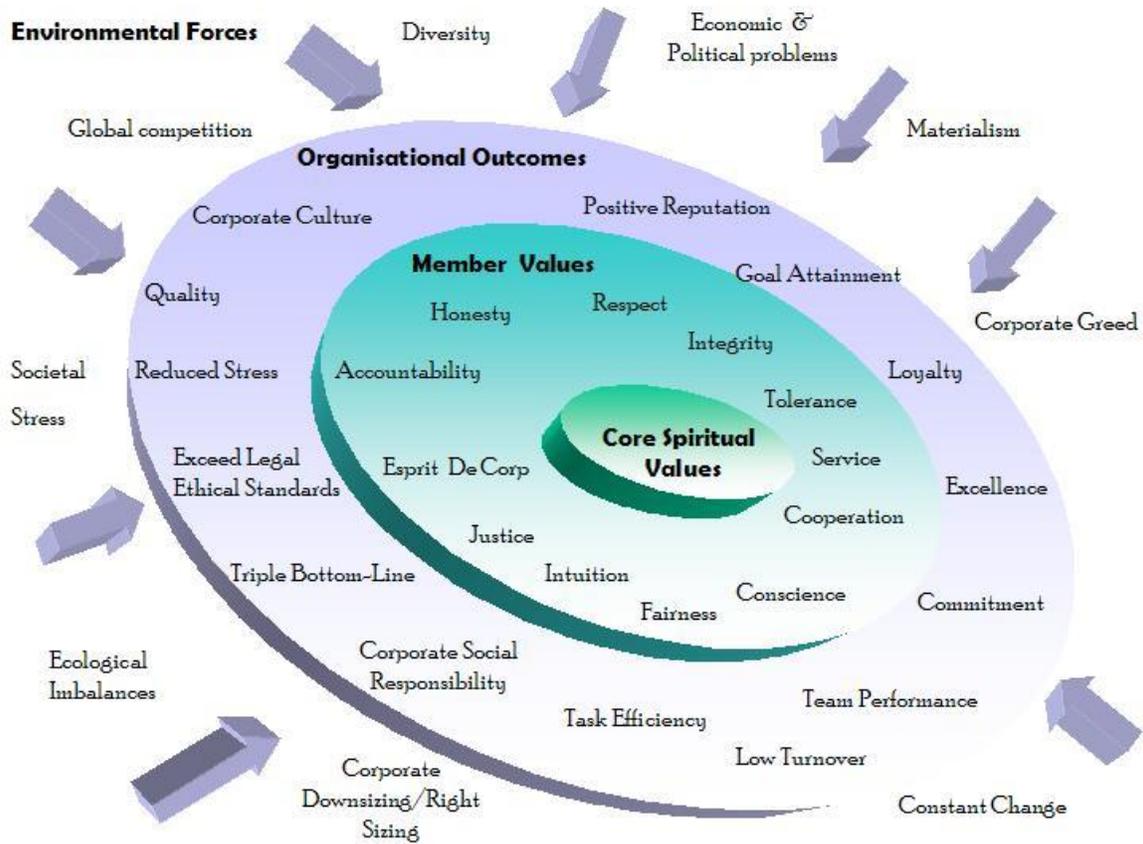


Figure 3.1 A Conceptual Model of Systems and Chaos Theory

Unlike the well-oiled systems theory which has been a part of management studies for over several decades, chaos theory is relatively new. The significance of the conceptual model of the systems and chaos perspective is that it presents the many layers that can be found in organisational life, from the exterior (environmental forces that are often chaotic and unpredictable compel organisations to learn, realign and transform) down through to the hidden dimension of each individual member who makes up that organisation. Although the diagram only highlights positive organisational values, there is no doubt the shadow sides also exist both at the organisational and individual levels. Moustakas (1956) argues that ‘man’s inner world’ constitutes “a unit in himself, a system which operates as a whole.”(p.277) and to view the person

in parts or pieces is invalid. In today's management parlance, this reflects the desire to be true to ourselves (Dhiman, 2007), as well as seeking to find resonance within our workplace (Hultman, 2005). It is this unity of the inner world (system) that serves the personal growth of the individual towards his self-fulfilment. Senge (1990) argues that the process of continually clarifying and deepening personal vision can evolve through mindful understanding which involves a shift of mindset from seeing oneself as separate from the world to being connected to the world, and realising how one is a co-creator of one's reality (in both good and bad circumstances). He also suggests that learning new skills and capabilities changes our way of seeing the world and these new awareness and sensibilities in time evolve into attitudes and beliefs, shaping member values and cultures.

Cartwright (1991) explains that chaos as defined by Gleick (1987) is "order without predictability" which he clarifies as "order that is invincible" implying an inherent "uncertainty principle – not just in how we perceive the world, but in how the world actually works" (pp.44-45). Casey (2002) further reiterates that the complex problem of moral action and irrationality within managerial and organisational analysis have tended to be under-recognised and it arises again in this present era demanding a more rigorous, reflexive, social ethic of analysis of organisations. Casey (2002) also cautions that in contemporary postmodernist organisations, workers would increasingly seek to "express alternative, non-conformist, self-identities" and assertions of personal value to resist, the erosion of self-identity as a consequence of "intensified corporatisation" (p.158-160). Against these uncertainties, reconciling these ideas with the systems perspective (presented in the previous sub-section) reveals an interesting coherence where in close examination Figure 3.2 clearly depicts the unpredictability of the external forces suggesting therefore both chaos and systems theory represent two sides of the same coin. The external forces in the organisations environment constantly present a chaotic scheme of events

that forces organisational systems to constantly transform and realign for success and effectiveness. Values form the foundation of sustainable behaviour as they are a fundamental part of how one defines him/herself and are often held unquestioned or unconsciously (Dahl, 2001). These member values in turn drive different kinds of human behaviour which results in correspondingly different outcomes for the organisation they belong to. Anecdotal evidence exists to suggest that when employees have a deep sense of meaning, purpose and connection at work, then they are more likely to be genuinely committed to their work organisations to promote positive organisational outcomes such as trust, esprit de corps, ethics, corporate social responsibility etc. Of course the reverse is also true. The corporate scams and scandals discussed in Chapter One testifies that negative outcomes are a real challenge in modern businesses especially when the unpredictable external chaos is met with internal values that are themselves shady or suspicious. For organisational outcomes to be sustainable they must, positive and noble values first and foremost must begin and exist in individuals in positions of power to lead to a shift in the collective consciousness to manage in unpredictable and challenging times.

Thus both the systems and chaos perspective helps to provide the context for understanding that the spiritual values or beliefs located in the individual's inner world comes to be expressed in external social interactions whether that be with family, work, or in the community. Recent research demonstrates the utility of both chaos and systems approach. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) in discussing workplace spirituality highlight that emerging values are systems-oriented, ecological and spiritual in focus. DeFoore and Renesch (1995) apply an interdisciplinary systems paradigm to the workplace and suggest transformation is being seen predominantly in the areas of work-life balance and corporate social responsibility. Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers (1996) and Wheatley (2006), discuss the merits of chaos assuring that the darkness of chaos, brings forth the creative solutions and self-organising capability bringing order to complex systems and urging

leaders to embrace the new realities to discover order in a chaotic world. Plowman et al., (2007) suggest that leaders as enablers, disrupt existing patterns of behavior, encourage novelty, and make sense of emerging events for others, laying leadership attributes in demand in chaotic environments. Thus both systems and chaos theory provides a useful micro versus macro level view of connections and interdependencies between the systemic, holistic spiritual inner core of organisational leaders to see if they have what it takes to manage external environmental and social behaviours that are in constant unpredictable flux.

3.4.2 Heuristics

Heuristics, the root meaning of which is to discover or find (Moustakas, 1990, p.9) allows the researcher to immerse/contemplate various sources of data to uncover the meaning in participants' lives, and is a derivative of the phenomenological approach (Janesick, 2000; Patton, 2002). Table 3.1 list the five key characteristics of the Heuristics approach, establishing its value for a qualitative inquiry for a tacit subject that is difficult to neither capture nor measure. Sela-Smith (2002) suggests Moustakas legitimised the term heuristics to define the organised and systematic form for investigating human experience. Attention is focused inward on feeling responses, which may involve internal subjective experiences. This inner tacit dimension was largely negated as a source of scientifically approved knowledge because of the positivistic dominance in the scientific community. In studying the phenomena of loneliness in the 1960s, Moustakas was critical of conventional research methods of that time (predominantly quantitative and externally focused) because they screened out the presence of the researcher.

Characteristics of the Heuristic Research Approach	
1	It seeks to reveal more fully the essence or meaning of a phenomenon of human experience.
2	It seeks to discover the qualitative aspects, rather than quantitative dimensions, of the phenomenon
3	It engages one's total self and evokes a personal; and passionate involvement and active participation in the process.
4	It does not seek to predict or determine causal relationships
5	It is illuminated through careful descriptions, illustrations, metaphors, poetry, dialogue and other creative renderings rather than measurements, ratings or scores

Table 3.1 Five Characteristics of the Heuristic Research Approach

(Source: Moustakas, 1990, p.42)

The researcher was important in the investigations of human experience to not only reveal the nature and meaning of the phenomena being researched but also to help develop the methods and procedures of the research. Moustakas's use of heuristics provides entrance to the tacit dimension (Sela-Smith, 2002) and this approach has been supported by recent research using heuristics to study spiritual influences on leadership activities, and empowerment in women (Moody, 2005; Scott, 2003). As this study aims to discover the inner subjective spiritual awareness of business leaders the six phases in heuristic design provides an avenue to describe, analyse and explain the essence of spiritual experience and its meaning in the lives of participants.

3.4.2.1 Phase 1: Formulating the research question

Heuristic inquiry begins with the internal search to discover a "question that is strongly connected to one's own identity and selfhood" (Moustakas, 1990, p.40). This criterion was effortlessly met by the researcher, as the research question for this project rose from a very personal curiosity to know the higher purpose of life. Being married to a businessman and constantly socialising in business circles, the subject of spirituality and its relevance to the world of business, simultaneously posed a challenge and an opportunity because this was a little known territory within the field of business research. This background to the origin of the research

question fulfils the heuristic demand that the research question must hold a significant value and passion for the researcher.

3.4.2.2 Phase 2: Exploration – immersion in the setting

Moustakas (1990) recommends a process of immersion in the topic to discover meanings in everyday observations, conversations and published works. Sela-Smith's (2002) depiction of the immersion phase coincides strongly to the researcher's experience: "something amazing happens when a researcher has surrendered to the call in Phase 1. When the question has been properly formed, it appears to have the power that draws the image of the question everywhere in the researcher's life experience" (p.66). This occurs through a continual movement from the inner experience to the outer that stimulated the research question.

In contrasting the events that were unfolding in the research journey, against the heuristic process, there appeared to be a synchronicity with relevant spiritual events and material. This period of intense reading and literature review led to meetings with various people interested in the subject of spirituality, including potential research participants, spiritual teachers, aspirants, peer-researchers and academics at conferences dedicated to the subject. These interactions were opportunities for dialogue on the subject of spirituality which further helped to refine the research questions. As the research journey evolved, the match with the heuristics method began to clearly crystallise.

3.4.2.3 Phase 3: Incubation

Incubation is the time period during which the researcher retreats from intense, concentrated, conscious focus on the question and allows the inner tacit dimension to wrestle with the new input gained during immersion (Sela-Smith, 2002, p.67). The researcher was convinced that an authentic inquiry into a subject as deep and personal as spirituality could not be

justifiably conducted unless the researcher herself experienced a level of self-awareness and self-knowledge in the subject matter. For this reason, the researcher took a year off work and studies, and travelled to India, enrolled in an ashram to study the Vedantic philosophy which was the researcher's own little known spiritual heritage and background for a period of 8 months. (See Appendix F for details of spiritual journey in India).

Moustakas (1990,p.28) relates that during this phase “a researcher is seemingly moving on a totally different path” explaining that during this process the researcher is no longer absorbed in the research in any direct way. This was exactly the condition in which the researcher enrolled in the ashram, with what appeared to be a disconnection from the doctoral study and cut off from the academic and “civilised” world. Moustakas (1990, p.29) continues to assure that “despite the disconnection from the research question, the period of incubation enables the inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities”. Polanyi (1964) asserts that discovery does not ordinarily occur through deliberate mental operations and directed calculated efforts but through the incubation process, the heuristic researcher gives birth to a new understanding or perspective that reveals additional qualities of the phenomenon, Patton (2002) believes this aspect of heuristic inquiry legitimizes the personal experiences, reflections and insights of the researcher. Upon return from this incubatory stage, the researcher was ready to undertake the next process of breaking through from inner tacit awareness to reconciling to conscious awareness.

3.4.2.4 Phase 4: Illumination

According to Sela-Smith (2002), this fourth phase begins as soon as the inner work of Phase 3 ends, revealing new experiences, new interpretations, new meanings or it may correct distorted understandings. The researcher had already developed a habit of reflection and regular meditation which were becoming a routine system of engaging in internal dialogue within her. Sela-Smith (2002) clarifies that “illumination is not something that can be planned as it occurs

spontaneously, as major reorganisation of knowing happens and transformation takes place on a deep level” (p.67)..The greatest effect of illumination was noticed when the researcher embarked on the process of finding suitable participants for the research through a purposive sampling method. Despite beginning with no known suitable candidates, within a relatively short-time, a good sample of participants had been assembled mainly through word of mouth and mutual contacts. The creative process of locating what is needed when it is needed is what Sela-Smith refers to as the spontaneous process of internal knowing that inadvertently reorganises the external world as required. This illumination phase prepares the researcher to enter into the fieldwork phase of data-collection and engaging with others on the topic of study. At this phase, the researcher had to wear several hats simultaneously, firstly inhabiting the role of the interviewer, secondly as a participant observer, with a sympathetic insight to the interviewee’s perceptions, having gained some experience at the ashram as a dedicated spiritual seeker, and finally as the objective uninvolved witness. An advantage here was that the researcher multilingual capacity helped to put participants at ease, when some informants chose to speak in Malay or Tamil, rather than English, all three languages that the researcher was fluent at. This also enabled a deeper insight into the participants’ perceptions, as surmounting the language barrier pre-empted any national or cultural impediments to be easily overcome.

3.4.2.5 Phase 5: Explication

In this phase of explication, a heuristics researcher attends to their own awareness, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and judgements as a prelude to the understanding that is derived from conversations and dialogues with others (Moustakas, 1990). This advice was of particular significance the more the researcher engaged in a level of self-disclosure on matters relevant to the subject of spirituality, the more willing and open the participants became in disclosing their own private worlds and sharing information. Thus the previous stages of incubation and

illumination were felt profoundly at the data gathering stage. The more time spent sharing personal stories and disclosing inner world experiences, the greater was the level of trust. With the benefit of hindsight, it is obvious that if the researcher had not taken time to go through the stages of incubation and illumination - the internal shift in clarifying the meaning and understanding on spirituality would not have occurred. This was the benefit gained from the intense period of retreat at the ashram, without which the researcher would have been severely handicapped in the field.

Mere intellectualising of the topic from typical academic review of literature would not have created a level of trust that was needed between researcher and participants. Spirituality was a subject that was held deep and close to participants' hearts and if they were dealing with a clinical investigator, they would not have the level of comfort and understanding necessary to share intimate accounts of their spiritual experiences.

3.4.2.6 Phase 6: Creative synthesis

In the final phase, creative synthesis enables the researcher to synthesise and bring together as a whole an individual's story that reveals some new whole that has been identified and experienced as a result of the researcher becoming thoroughly familiar with all the data in its major constituents, qualities and themes. Moustakas (1990) insists that the "creative synthesis can only be achieved through tacit and intuitive powers" (p.31). This process is achieved in this research by analysis of the in-depth interviews and narratives and all collected field notes and secondary data. Moustakas suggests that beyond knowledge of the data, a period of solitude and meditation focussing on the topic and question are the essential preparatory steps for inspiration that eventually enables a creative synthesis. To sum up, Moustakas (1990) concludes that "behaviour is governed and experience is determined by the unique perceptions, feelings, intuitions, beliefs, and judgements housed in the internal frame of reference of a person (p.32).

Which suggest that meanings are inherent in a particular world-view, in this case involving the researcher, her research subjects and the world they both occupy.

Therefore the choice of a heuristic research design and methodology is a deliberate and determined attempt to break from genre-bound traditions and offer a fresh new way of researching tacit dimensions in the business arena. Risking critique, particularly from the business management community where quantitative traditions still predominate and qualitative methods are extremely bound by existing definitive methodological norms, the researcher defends that herein lies an obvious methodological contribution and strength of this research.- in its departure from the reigning genre and adopting a lesser known but equally valid form of qualitative methodology borrowed from the fields of psychology and sociology.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was conducted in three distinct phases, Preliminary Phase; Phase I and Phase II. Data was collected from two countries to represent an Eastern (Malaysia) and Western (Australia) sample. Figure 3.2 depicts an overview of the research design showing the primary method for data collection. The preliminary phase is the preparation phase where the researcher was getting closely acquainted with the topic and preparing instruments for investigation.

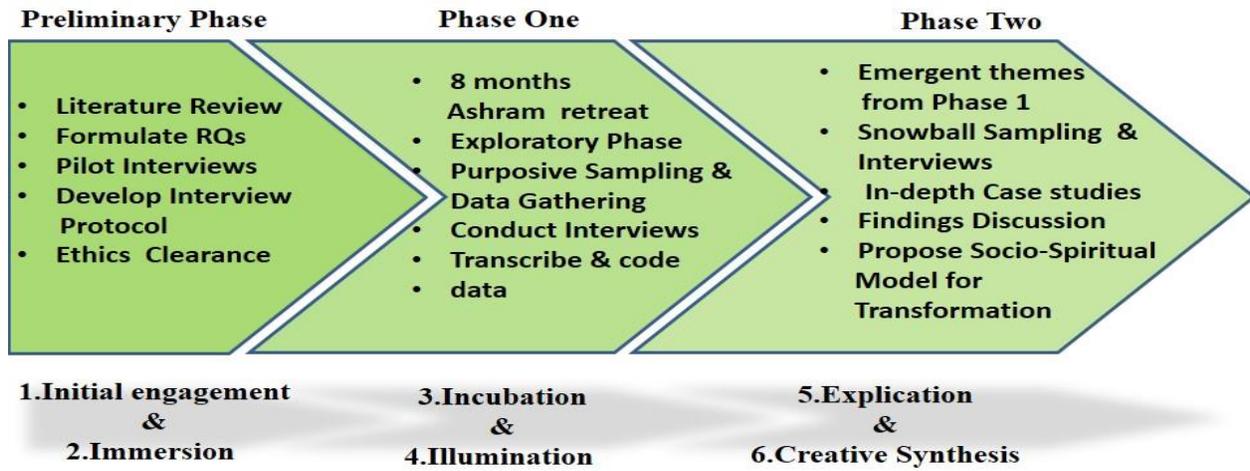


Figure 3.2: The Research Design

Phase I represents the exploratory field work phase involving 12 business leaders and 4 consultants and Phase II concentrated on three in-depth case-studies selected from the initial phase. Zikmund (1991) describes research design as a master plan that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information. It provides the researcher with a blue-print that allows the researcher to plan a strategy and be aware of details for conducting the research. The research design also dictates boundaries and enables the researcher to anticipate potential problems they may encounter in the field (Ahuja, 2005). This research was conducted using Moustakas' (1990) six heuristic research phases – of initial engagement immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis described in detail in the previous section.

3.5.1. Preliminary phase

3.5.1.1. Heuristics Stage 1: Initial engagement

The heuristic stages of immersion and incubation included a period of initial engagement with the topic area which involves a general review of literature in the field of workplace spirituality. The immersion into the topic area allowed the researcher to become alert to the themes of spirituality during casual conversations and purposive discussions with others on the subject of spirituality. During this phase the researcher also attended several conferences in the area of spirituality to get acquainted with others in the same field of research. This led to an initial formulation of research questions which were refined and scaled down in scope after receiving constructive feedback from the panel that approved the confirmation of this doctoral candidature. The process and implementation of the study during the preliminary and exploratory phases is depicted in Figure 3.3. The figure depicts various activities that were accomplished in both the early preliminary phases including literature review, formulation of research questions, preliminary pilot interviews, and development of interview protocol and applying for the University's Ethics clearance.

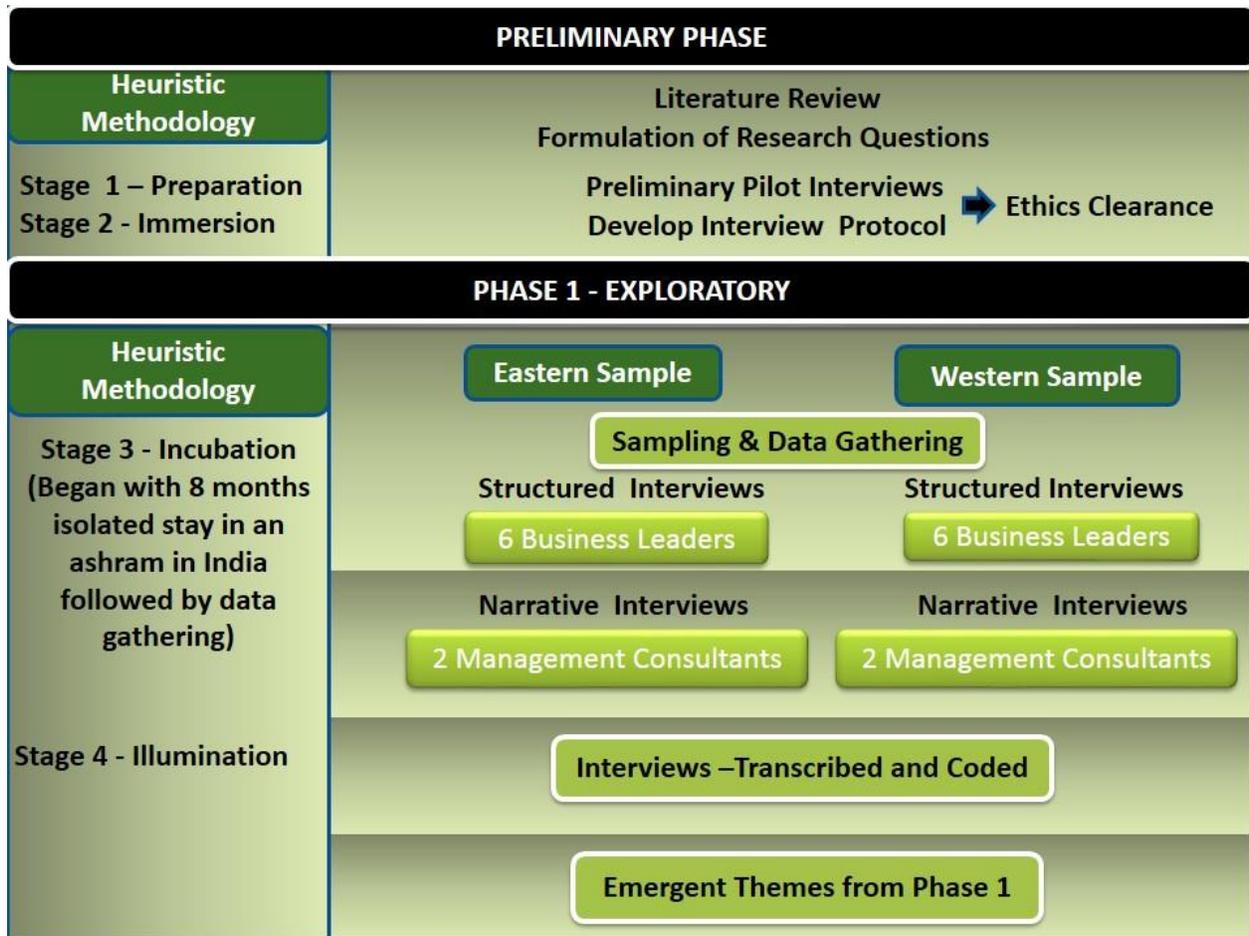


Figure 3.3 Preliminary Phase and Phase 1

Pilot interviews

The preliminary phase included a pilot where a series of early interviews were conducted with 2 main objectives:

1. To refine the interview protocol to be used in the study.
2. To gain preliminary understanding of the issues that may arise in the field given that the participants of this research are busy senior executives and scheduling interview time and access into their business organizations can be problematic and is a premium consideration.

In preparing the structured interview schedule for Phase 1 of this research, a pilot interview was conducted and tested with a colleague and fellow researcher at the Department of Management, Monash University, Caulfield Campus. It revealed several weaknesses with the instrument, which was then further refined as described in the next section. With these improvements, further pilot testing was done with potential participants (Table 3.2) to further test the flow and structure of the interview schedule.

Phase	Interviewee	Organisation Type	Date of Visit	Data Sources	Interview Location
Pilot	PN University lecturer	Monash University Caulfield Campus	1 Feb 2006	Draft structured interview	Cafe, Melbourne, Australia
Pilot	HGH Professional engineer (retired)	Multinational company	6 Dec 2006	Draft structured interview	Monash University, Sunway Campus, Researcher's office.
Pilot	RG Electrical supervising engineer	Mechanical and electrical consulting firm	15 Dec 2006	Draft structured interview	Monash University, Sunway Campus, Researcher's office Malaysia
Pilot	PKK Group Executive Chairman	Travel, hotel and restaurants -group of companies	16 Dec 2006	Draft structured interview, website material and site tour.	On-site in a meeting room, in participant's office, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

Table 3.2 Pilot Interview Schedule

The pilot interviews also provided the researcher with valuable experience on potential difficulties that could arise in the field and further improved the content validity of the interview protocol that was ultimately used when actual fieldwork commenced. One of the invaluable lessons learnt during the pilot phase include choosing suitable locations for the conduct of the interviews. Although interviews conducted in the natural setting of the participants provide the researcher with valuable real-time experience of the activity and feel of the participants' work

environment, it also had its disadvantages. This included frequent office related-interruptions such as business calls or visitations by colleagues, or unscheduled events that were of priority which disrupted the interview process. This took the participants' attention momentarily away from the focus of the research, thus affecting the flow of the interviews with starts, stops and spurts. Subsequently, the Phase 1 interviews of key participants were executed mainly in quiet and comfortable one-on-one settings, often times away from the office environment, to allow participants to reflect and sometimes think deeply before they respond to questions. Thus some interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants or in quiet public cafes and if on-site, often in dedicated meeting rooms rather than in the participant's office to minimise disruptions.

Interview protocol

After conducting several pilot interviews, the researcher executed the following to ensure content validity for the interview protocol. A section was added to the interview protocol consisting of clarifying comments. A brief explanatory statement was added to the structured interview schedule used in Phase I (See Appendix A) to explain that they could respond from either a religious, spiritual or both perspectives whichever was applicable to their personal belief system.. These clarifying comments were read out to participants prior to commencing the interviews which ensured participants were informed and aware they were under no obligation to respond and can opt to refrain from any questions if they felt uncomfortable at any point.

Ethical compliance

It is standard practice in most universities to have researchers obtain ethics clearance from a review board. At Monash University, this is co-ordinated by the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research on Human (SCERH). Fornaciari and Dean (2001) stress that research focusing on spirituality or religion have a greater level of moral implication and therefore this research project which probes into the delicate areas of human belief systems had to be stringently evaluated.

After several amendments, ethics approval was received from the Monash University SCERH. Subsequently, all participants were given an Explanatory statement (see Appendix B) and were clearly informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they had the right to refuse to answer any question or choose not to participate or withdraw at any stage of the research. The Explanatory statement also provided relevant details and nature of the research to be conducted assuring participants that all information gathered would be held strictly confidential protecting the identity of participants and their organisations. Prior to commencing each interview, participants were asked to sign a Consent form (see Appendix E) and hence were well informed about the nature of this research. The Consent form also allowed participants to decide if they wished to be further contacted if required. The research was conducted with no untoward incidence in the field and all participants voluntarily and a few enthusiastically participated in the research process.

3.5.1.2 Heuristics Stage 2: Immersion

Formulating a clear research question is an important step in the research process as it primarily determines which method to employ and also who to include as participants in the study. In this study the questions crystallised through the early immersion and incubation stages of the heuristics approach. Thus the research question was refined several times to arrive at a final set of questions. They were divided into one central and three topical questions. They seek to address the research problem identified and elaborated in Chapter 1 and are aimed at meeting two research objectives, firstly to establish if there was awareness of tacit spiritual values that promote greater meaning, purpose, motivation and worker satisfaction at the workplace. Secondly, to propose an effective model for transformation of work environment based on a socio-spiritual paradigm.

The central question to this study was:

1. How aware are key managers/leaders of their own spiritual beliefs and values?
2. The three related topical questions were:
3. What are some of the workplace value systems observed among organisational members?
4. What are some of the spiritual dimensions observed/practiced in the workplace?
5. To what degree have spiritual dimensions influenced and/or enhanced workplace behaviour and activity.

The research problem, research questions and objectives are depicted in Figure 3.4.



Figure 3.4 Research Problems, Questions and Objectives

3.5.1.3 Heuristics Stage 3: Incubation

The preliminary phase also denotes an incubation period which for this researcher involved a period of secluded and intense spiritual retreat in an ashram in India for 8 months. According to Heuristics methodology, during this period the researcher retreats from intense concentration on the research questions and allows for a space to instead focus on the inner intuitive and tacit dimensions. It allowed this researcher to extend and clarify her own awareness and understanding of what spirituality means to her own self. Re-emerging from the spiritual retreat with greater conviction on the subject, the researcher resumed the preliminary phase.

3.5.2. Phase I – Exploratory

3.5.2.1. Heuristics Stage 4: Illumination

Phase I was designed to mainly address the central research question to explore the level of spiritual awareness amongst research participants. This exploratory Phase is the illumination and explication phases according to Heuristics methodology. In this phase spontaneous events lead the researcher to suitable participants as the tacit knowledge acquired during the periods of immersion and incubation leads to illumination or in other words, breakthroughs into conscious awareness occurs with ideas or events that move the researcher forward with the research agenda.

Purposive sampling

According to Ahuja (2005) in purposive sampling, also known as judgemental sampling, the researcher purposely chooses persons who meet the unique and appropriate characteristics required of the sample members. Thus the selection of participants is deliberate and based on prior judgment. This researcher began the task of locating suitable participants for this research. While in the initial stages this proved to be a challenge, because the process of knowing if

someone had a spiritual inclination was not easily identifiable, with a few mutual contacts suitable participants were assembled without much delay.

Structured interviews with business leaders

Having formulated the research questions, research techniques and tools employed are central to the data collection process. The choice of data collection instruments to collect highly subjective and richly complex data with sensitive ethical and moral undertones requires skilful deployment of data collection tools. This was critical to gather accurate and truthful accounts from research participants to ensure the validity and credibility of the qualitative research process. It involved gaining the trust and confidence of the research participants. Although a heuristics method is often open-ended the value of a well-structured research design cannot be disputed as it aids the researcher through the stages of preparation, data collection and analysis. Data was collected between the periods beginning March 2006 to June 2010. In Phase 1, data collection was done primarily using a structured interview protocol but also included a variety of data sources. A total of twelve business leaders, six from each country were interviewed (see Table 3.3).

Research interviews are one of several types of qualitative data collection options that include case studies, company documentation, historical material, observation and story-telling (Creswell, 1994). Van Manen best summarizes the use of interviews:

“(1) it may be used as a means of exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a source for developing a richer and a deeper understanding of a human phenomenon, and (2) the interview may be used as a vehicle to develop a conversation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of the experience” (Van Manen 1990, p.66).

Although Mousatakas (1990, p.46) suggest that the length of interviews “are not ruled by the clock but by inner experiential time” for the purpose of a guiding principle the often time-

conscious participants from a variety of business fields were advised that the interview can take between 60-90 minutes in Phase 1 and 45-60 minutes in Phase 2. In the field, some eager participants would extend interview time by up to four hours or more in some instances.

No	Interviewee	Organisation Type	Date of Visit	Data Sources	Interview Location
1	DVE Executive Chairman	Group of Companies	18 Dec 2006	Draft structured interviews, website material	Beginning at office and concluding participant's home, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
2	JFFL Senior Retail Manager	Retail Store	19 Dec 2006	Structured interview, website material and site tour of his Spiritual Centre	World Spiritual Foundation Centre, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
3	JTP Regional Sales Manager	Multinational Pharmaceutical Firm	28 Dec 2006	Structured interview	Hotel. lobby where participant was staying for business.in Subang Jaya, Malaysia
4	ZMS General Manager, Industrial Division	Diversified Group of Regional Companies in South East Asia (Technology)	18 Jan 2007	Structured interview and site visit	Office of participant, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
5	DTHTMI Executive Chairman	Project Management and Consultancy (Infrastructure)	11 Dec 2007	Structured interview, website material, published material	Office of participant, adjourning to meeting room, Petaling Jaya. Malaysia
6	KM Managing Director	Landscape, Architecture and Design Firm	9 Jan 2008	Structured interview, company profile documents	Office of participant, adjourning to a cafe in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7	DMH Bank manager	Banking Firm	1 Feb 2007	Structured interview	Meeting room at participant's office Melbourne CBD, Australia
8	JE(M) Senior Consultant	Leadership Academy, Banking Firm	2 Feb 2007	Structured interview	Home of participant, Malvern, Vic, Australia
9	NF Chairman and CEO	Green Energy Firm	10 June 2008	Structured interview, Printed Material	Office of participant in Brunswick, Vic, Australia
10	JE (F) Managing Director	Office Business Solutions Firm	11 June 2008	Structured interview	Office of participant in Bayswater, Vic, Australia
11	IK Executive Chairman	Mining Firm	4 Sept 2008	Structured interview, website material	Participant based in Western Aust. Interview was conducted via Skype and teleconference.
12	AB Managing Director	Education Software Firm	12 Dec 2008	Structured interview, product and company profile, site Tour	Office of participant in Eltham, Vic, Australia

Table 3.3 Phase 1 Structured Interview Schedule with Business Leaders

All interviews in this research were conducted face-to face in locations chosen or convenient to the participants except for one interstate participant who consented to a telephone interview and also communicated via Skype and online videos. This allowed the researcher to establish a good rapport even with this one participant who was not met face to face due to his distant geographical location.

Narrative interviews with business consultants

Phase 1 data was further augmented and triangulated with four interviews with management consultants. Narrative interviews are described by Lindlof (1995) as one of the ways to obtain rich stories, often biographical through this direct interview method. Table 3.4 details the narrative interviews conducted with some business management consultants in both cultures to obtain their viewpoints based on their professional merit was provided with an independent and strategic lens.

No	Interviewee	Organisation Type	Date of Visit	Data Sources	Interview Location
1	KNA (Consultant) Group Chairman and Managing Director	HR Consulting Firm	7 July 2009	Narrative Interview, company profile	Office of participant Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
2	AZ (Consultant) Managing Director	Marketing, Training and Development Consultancy	9 July 2009	Narrative interview, printed material, website material	Office of participant Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
3	RH Consultant	Consulting Services	20 Oct 2008	Narrative Interview, Printed Material	Office of participant in Melbourne CBD, Australia
4	SF Consultant	Consulting Services	14 Nov 2008	Narrative Interview, printed Material	Office of participant in Melbourne CBD, Australia.

Table 3.4 Phase I Narrative Interview Schedule with Business Consultants

Interview transcription and coding

The interviews in Phase 1 were transcribed verbatim as soon as possible after each interview session. These transcriptions were saved as text files and imported into the Qualitative Software package NVivo7 & 8. The transcriptions was printed and proofread for errors, and also used to inform later interviews.

Emergent themes

The computer software program NVivo (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty. Ltd., 1997) was utilized to search for patterns and themes in the data. NVivo is software package that allows the management and organization of data through indexing. It enables one to develop and modify a coding scheme consisting of nodes and sub-nodes in a tree-like hierarchy, to analyse data by coding and categorizing text units, and to conduct searches for key words or phrases, thus facilitating the examination of current or potential subcategories. The software is helpful in organizing and managing data, in exploring and searching for patterns in the data, and in identifying relationships between categories and patterns of coding.

The interview results of Phase 1 were analysed for emergent themes. These themes further informed the research in Phase 2 where two case-studies were conducted for an in-depth and longitudinal analysis. The main sample or key informants for the case-studies were selected from Phase 1. Analysis and findings of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be discussed in-depth in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.5.3. Phase II – In depth case studies

3.5.3.1 Heuristics Stage 5: Explication

In Phase II, three case-studies were conducted, (one in Australia and two in Malaysia) using a combination of data collection techniques including narrative interviews, observant

participation, secondary sources such as websites and printed materials. Qualitative research techniques commonly used in heuristics include a variety of interviewing approaches. Two participants were selected from each country to continue into Phase II of this research. However, one participant withdrew from the research due to unforeseen circumstances so finally only three case-studies were completed. (See Figure 3.5). This unfortunate development caused a gender imbalance that could not be resolved within the key respondent's sampling at Phase II without adversely impacting the progress of the field-work (See Figure 3.5). Thus, this limitation is duly acknowledged.

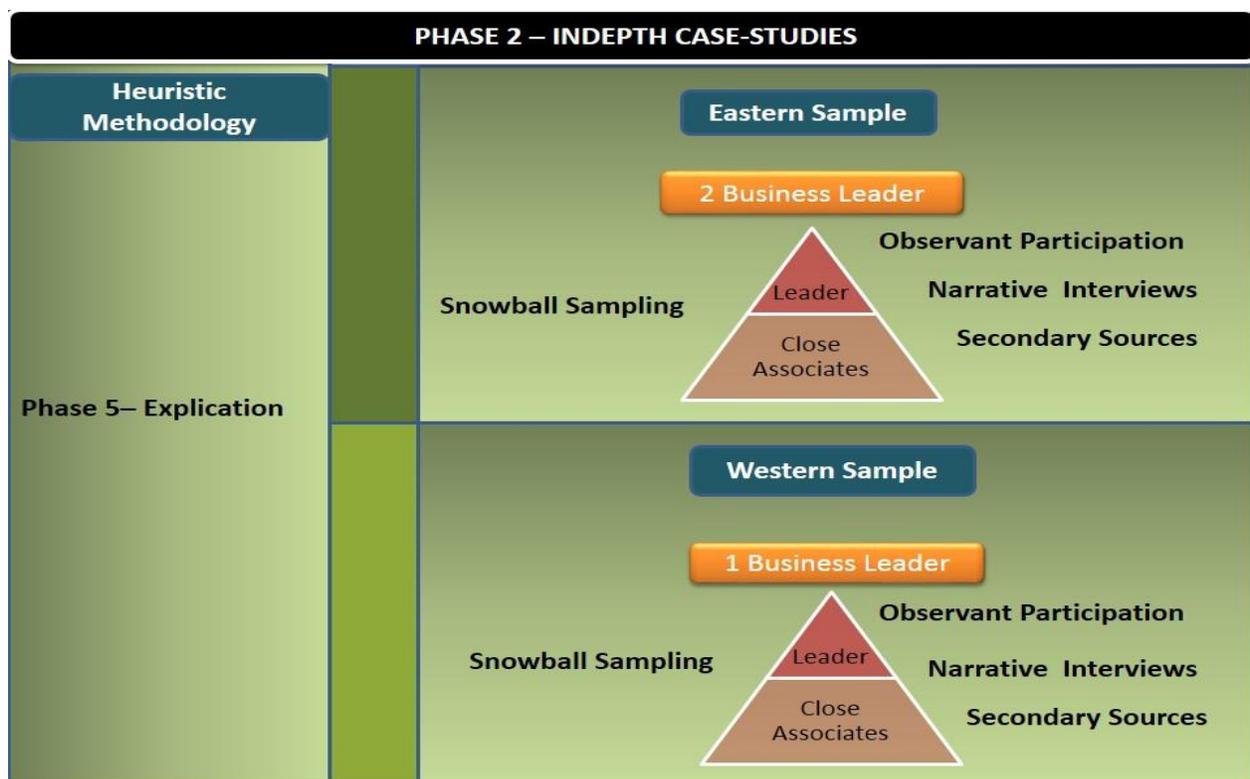


Figure 3.5 Phase II – In-depth Case Studies

More narrative interviews with multiple informants were conducted for triangulation purposes. Phase II was mainly designed to address the 3 related topical questions that involved observing workplace values, behaviours and activity that could be linked to the spiritual values held by the key participant.

The main criterion for their selection was that they displayed characteristics that resonated closely with objectives of this study and were willing to commit to proceed into Phase II of the research. This entailed the use of multiple data sources, including additional narrative interviews with themselves as primary informants, and also their work associates and close family members. Narrative interviews were the primary tool for data collection in Phase II. Each key informant of Phase II was observed and interviewed multiple times. They were observed during meetings with a range of subordinates/peers, and during general interaction in the day-to-day office environment. Following each observation, the researcher (where required) discussed with the participant her perception to resolve any perceived ambiguities and also for the researcher to gain greater insight into the participant's viewpoint regarding office and other relationships.

Informal conversations and other sources of data

Patton (1980) presents three basic interviewing techniques often employed in qualitative research; the informal conversation interview, the general interview guide and the open-ended interview. According to Moustakas (1990, p.46) informal conversational interviews “that relies on spontaneous generation of questions and conversations in which the research subjects participate in a natural, unfolding dialogue with the research investigator” is most consistent with the “rhythm and flow of heuristic exploration and the search for meaning” (p.47). In the field the researcher found such informal conversations with various participants as a rich source of data, and these were later recorded as field-notes for reference. Apart from the interviews, data was also collected using other sources including personal observations, artefacts, and reflective field notes to understand and describe the spiritual beliefs and practices of participants in the context of their personal life and workplace influence. These include scrutinising relevant published material, newspaper reports, site visits, home visits and participating in an event or observing some spiritual rites and rituals performed at the workplace or homes of key participants. All

interviews were recorded; and the researcher also took notes, primarily as a back-up in case there was a problem with the audio-taping.

On-site observations provide a good source of data for assessment. Extensive notes on the workplace environment, including seating arrangements, announcements on bulletin boards, language used, and availability of technology were recorded. These field notes provides further insight into the nature of the relationships between members of the organisation and how artefacts or technology employed may influence workplace behaviours and activity. In addition, descriptive and reflective notes on leader/manager and subordinate interactions such as questions, responses, and actions such as in formal and informal meetings were observed where possible. This method of observation provided invaluable information for developing a full understanding of the underlying value systems at play in the respective organisations and for observing manager-worker interactions to gauge the comfort level and climatic circumstances of those relationships. Field notes and memos were written during or immediately after each visit. These provide descriptions of the physical setting, and the researcher's own perceptions of the climate at the workplace. Reflections were also made on the researcher's own interactions with the participants outside of the interview time, e.g. through e-mail, phone conversations, casual meetings where a comfort level was sufficiently established for some level of openness to reveal and share (occasionally sensitive or personal) information.

Snowball sampling: Access to Phase II participants

Snowball sampling is a technique in which the researcher begins the research with few known or available participants and subsequently the initial participants give other names who meet the criteria of the research (Ahuja, 2005). This process is continued until adequate numbers of participants are interviewed or until no more participants are discovered. Suitable participants in Phase II were selected using the following criteria.

- The key participants (primary informants who participated in Phase I of this research and are currently leaders or senior level managers of commercial business organisations);
- These primary informants provide further contacts which may have included current employees, subordinates, peers or superiors of the primary informant. Also those who closely engage with the primary informant such as clients or suppliers/vendors, former colleagues and persons who are related to the primary informant such as family or close friends.
- Occasionally these include Consultants engaged in business management or organisational development consulting operations associated with primary informant. From these data sources, further analysis was conducted for textural descriptions and analysis to answer the study's research questions

Details of Phase II data collection schedule for the Eastern and Western case-studies with key informants and their close associates are presented in Table 3.5. and 3.6.

3.5.3.2 Eastern case study

Phase	Interviewee	Relationship to Key Informant	Date of Visit	Data Sources	Interview Location
II	Malaysia Key Informant DTHTMI Executive Chairman	Project Management & Consultancy for Construction and Infrastructure Projects in Malaysia	11 Dec 2007 – to Present Multiple meetings	Narrative Interview, website material, published material, official charity event, informal conversations, multiple casual meetings, emails, telephone conversations	On-site in participant's business operation in Petaling Jaya. Malaysia, Intestate Charity event in Pahang Malaysia. Was guest at researcher's home in Melbourne for 5 days in June 2010
	HBI Chief Operating Officer	Staff	22 Jan 2009	Narrative Interview	On-site Malaysia
	HTO Project Director and Advisor	Staff	8 July 2009	Narrative Interview	On-site Malaysia
	PV Project Secretary	Staff	6 July 2009	Narrative Interview	On-site Malaysia
	SV	Staff	6 July 2009	Narrative Interview	On-site
	YT	Spouse	8 July 2009, 22 June – 27 June 2010	Informal Conversations	Participant's Home in Malaysia.and Researcher's Home in Australia
	IT	Grand-daughter (adopted)	8 July 2009, 22 June – 27 June 2010	Informal Conversation	Participant's Home in Malaysia and Researcher's Home in Australia

Table 3.5 Data Collection Schedule for Eastern Case Study

3.5.3.3 Western case study

Phase	Interviewee	Relationship to Key Informant	Date of Visit	Data Sources	Interview Location
II	Australia Key Informant JE(M) Senior Consultant	Leadership Academy, Big Banking Firm in Australia	2 Feb 2007 to Present Multiple meetings	Narrative Interview, casual conversations, website material, office event, multiple casual meetings, emails, telephone conversations	Office in CBD and Home of participant, Malvern, Vic, Australia
	JH Leadership & Talent Design Manager	Staff	6 Jan 2010	Narrative Interview	On-site
	KC Leadership & Talent Design Consultant	Peer	5 Feb 2010	Narrative Interview	On-site
	FH Leadership & Talent Design Consultant	Staff	29 Jan 2010	Narrative Interview	On-site
	ET (retired) Former boss to key informant	Former Boss to key informant	21 Jan 2010	Narrative Interview	University Cafe
	KB Senior Manager Leadership & Talent, The Academy	Current Boss to key informant	24 Mar 2010	Narrative Interview	On-site
	AP	Peer	11 Mar 2010	Narrative Interview	On-site
	FS	Peer	29 Jan 2010	Narrative Interview	On-site
	KE	Spouse	14 Mar 2010	Informal Conversation	Key informant's family home in Australia
	SE	Daughter	14 Mar 2010	Informal Conversation	Key informant's family home in Australia
	EE	Daughter	14 Mar 2010	Informal Conversation	Key informant's family home in Australia

Table 3.6 Data Collection Schedule for Western Case Study

3.6 ESTABLISHING RIGOR/TRUST IN THE RESEARCH INQUIRY

3.6.1 Heuristics Stage 6: Creative synthesis

Validity in qualitative research refers to the correctness or credibility of a description or an interpretation. Threats to validity may include inaccurate or incomplete data, the imposition of

the researcher's own framework or meaning, and failure to pay attention to discrepant data or to consider alternative explanations (Maxwell, 1996). To avoid these threats, all interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim in Phase 1. Detailed descriptive notes were taken during personal observations. Multiple sources of data, in the form of interviews, personal observations on-site, artefacts, and field notes, allow for triangulation by providing corroborating evidence (Maxwell, 1996). Where required, participants were solicited for systematic feedback about data and conclusions. All personal observations are reported with evidence, and discussed with participants to correct any real or perceived inconsistencies. According to Creswell (1998), it is important to clarify researcher bias at the outset of the study. All efforts to reduce the effects of personal biases were made.

Reactivity refers to the effect the research or the researcher has on the participants. In qualitative research it is neither possible nor desirable to eliminate reactivity, but rather to understand it and use it productively (Maxwell, 1996). Thus the researcher acts more as an observer rather than as a participant observer as much as possible. Leading questions in interviews will be avoided. Where appropriate, on-site observations at the workplace were made on invitation or only after the participants become comfortable with the researcher and a rapport is established. Preservation of a good relationship between the researcher and participant is deemed to be most important, and the goal of the observation is to gain some thick description of workplace values and practices in their relation to the participant's spiritual beliefs.

3.6.1 Triangulation

Despite the clear benefit of a purely qualitative approach, the qualitative-quantitative tension was still felt on this research project. During the early stages of the research design the researcher experienced a level of anxiety to stay in line with the tradition of the business domain that emphasised on objective scientific inquiry especially common in the fields of business and

management studies seeking causal explanations and empirical generalisation. Given that the subject of spirituality was a non-typical aspect within the business domain, in an effort to convince and seek validation for this uncommon topic within the business discipline, the researcher had been over-anxious and deeply concerned with substantiation of the topic by initially opting for methodological triangulation using both qualitative and quantitative methods for data gathering. The combination of different methods to obtain data of the same phenomenon is favourably viewed to add rigor to any study (Denzin, 1989).

As the field work progressed it became clear there was great value in allowing the research questions to be further refined and methods to evolve and change as necessary during the course of the research investigation. Flick (2008 p. 64) reiterates this point by suggesting that “ the creativity in using the methods, in exploring the fields and taking up new insights and perspectives and in adapting the methods and plans to what fits the field” is an important quality of qualitative research. Spirituality as an area of tacit knowledge, and seeking causal explanations or empirical generalisations was difficult if not highly complex within interactions and cultural systems. Instead of aiming for both quantitative and qualitative methods triangulation to strengthen the credibility of the final findings, triangulation of sources and qualitative theory was used instead. Triangulation of qualitative data sources involves comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived different times and by different means within qualitative methods (Patton, 2002, p.559). This was achieved when the primary informants in this research were interviewed more than once at different times and the contents of their interviews were compared with some of the researcher’s own observations. For example what they said during one to one interviews as opposed to what they say or how they behaved when in a meeting with their peers or subordinates. Apart from the primary informants, information was triangulated from staff and clients working closely with the primary informant.

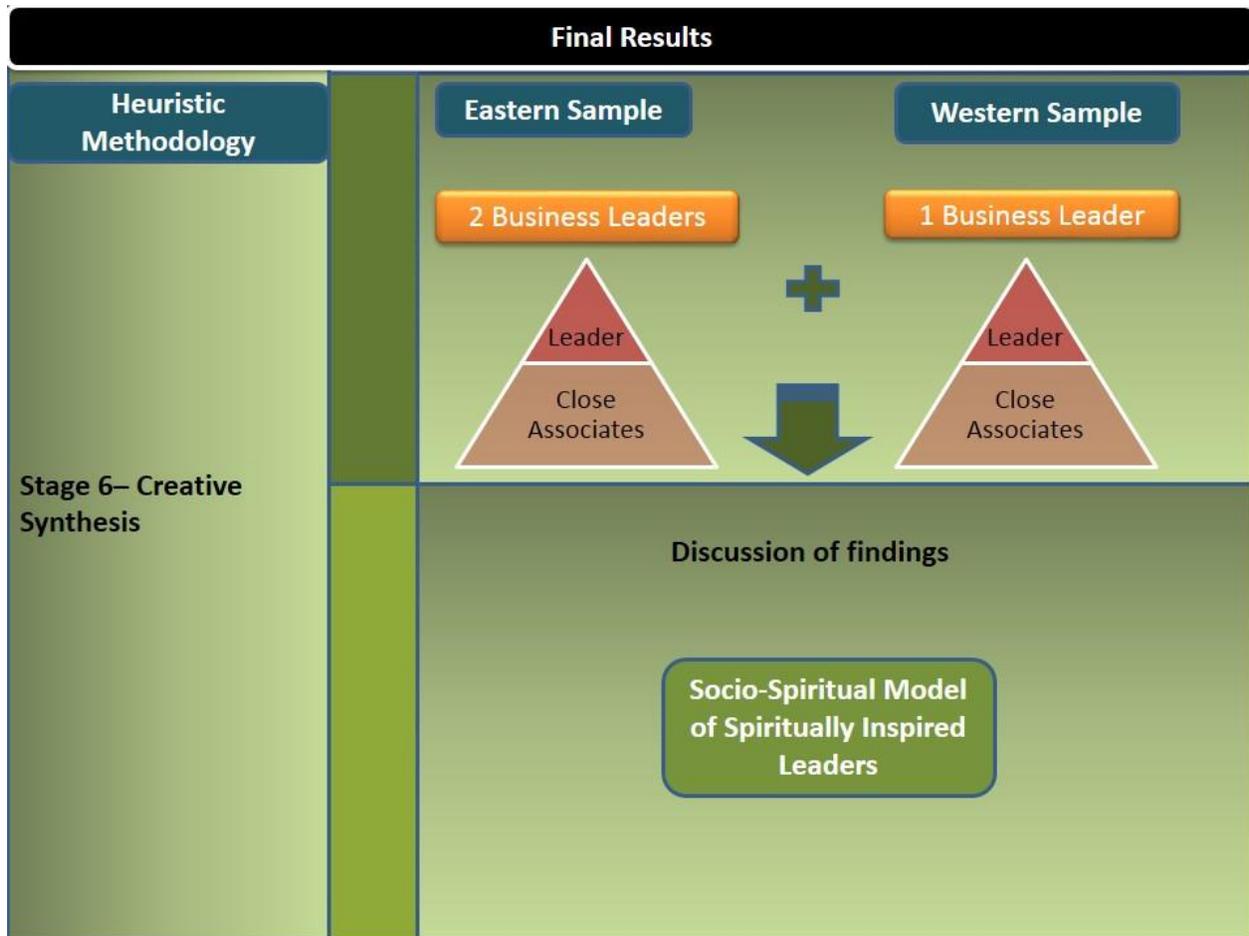


Figure 3.6 Final Heuristics Phase of Creative Synthesis

Figure 3.6 indicates the Final Heuristics Stage of Creative Synthesis where data from multiple sources along with researcher’s own observations culminate as a Grand Finale of the Heuristics process. This creative synthesis will be discussed in Chapter 7. Figure 3.6 depicts the triangulation process as it shows that close associates participated in the case studies. This included family members who provided further triangulation of source as they represent a group of individuals most closely associated with the primary informant. Finally, an entirely new category of informants outside of the business organisations studied were included. Business consultants who were not related to the organisations studied but who were important stakeholders in the world of business were sought to shed greater insight on the relevance of spirituality in business. Triangulation of theory involves using different theoretical perspectives

to look at the same data. The qualitative method has a wide range of theoretical orientations and the researcher opted to primarily use heuristic inquiry in this research. This triangulation of source and theory provides a multiple-lens view of the research subject serving to reduce systematic bias and distortion during data analysis. Therefore triangulation strengthens the findings or results through cross-validation when data from different sources converge and are found to be congruent, and on the other hand when there is a divergence or discrepancy in the data, an explanation can be developed to account for it.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the rationale of the constructivist approach adopted in this study. The chapter discussed systems and chaos theory as the theoretical underpinnings for theory building in this study. A detailed discussion and justification of the Heuristics methodology provides an overview of its suitability to this research project detailing the six distinct stages involved in the Heuristics design. The process involved consideration of the researcher's own experience in engaging with the concept of spirituality, both intellectually and experientially, as well as professionally and personally. The remaining sections focussed on detailing the research design which was conducted in three phases; Preliminary Phase; Phase I being the Exploratory Phase followed by Phase II, in-depth case-studies. The events that occurred in the field demonstrate the need to be flexible and to be prepared for eventualities beyond the control of the researcher. The data was collected primarily through structured interviews, narrative interviews and multiple sources of data, including observant participation, on-site visits, an examination of printed material etc. The NVivo software package was used to organise and analyse data with cross-analysis to compare and contrast data between the Eastern and Western sample. The next Chapter discusses the thematic structures that were derived from the findings in Phase I of this research project.

CHAPTER FOUR

PHASE I – SPIRITUAL AWARENESS IN BUSINESS LEADERS

The challenge for leaders is to live up to their fundamental responsibility as human beings: to treat others as themselves

Mohandas K. Gandhi

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter justified the value of a heuristic approach in undertaking a tacit subject of inquiry such as spirituality. Heuristics, by definition, does not claim ‘objective’ truths about ‘reality’ but rather concentrates on experiences and perceptions of experiences (Moustakas, 1990). In the same way, the statements of interviewees analysed in this chapter are not meant to be understood as truths about spirituality but rather as persons’ unique perceptions of their experiences hence the spiritual process is not necessarily a piece of acquired knowledge (intellectual) but a process of acquired knowing (experiential). Often it is a state of knowing from ones first-hand experience of a dimension of life that is deep and profound beyond the physical. Moustakas (1990) reaffirms that there is no substitute for direct, comprehensive, accurate, first-person accounts of experience. The accounts derived from the interview with research participants in Phase I is analysed into unique themes and depicted in this chapter through participants’ description and narratives.

4.2 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter begins by highlighting the order in which the four research questions are addressed between Chapters 4, 5 and 6. This is followed by a profile of all participants in Phase I. Next, the findings of Phase I interviews are presented. The various themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged from these are systematically presented and analysed with relevant and illustrative quotes derived from the interviews conducted with Phase I participants. Out of the

four research questions developed, the central question concerning individual awareness and clarity on the complex topic of spirituality is addressed in this chapter. The remaining 3 research questions addressing the impact of spiritually-inspired leaders in an organisational context will be explored in Chapters 5 and 6 (Figure 4.1).

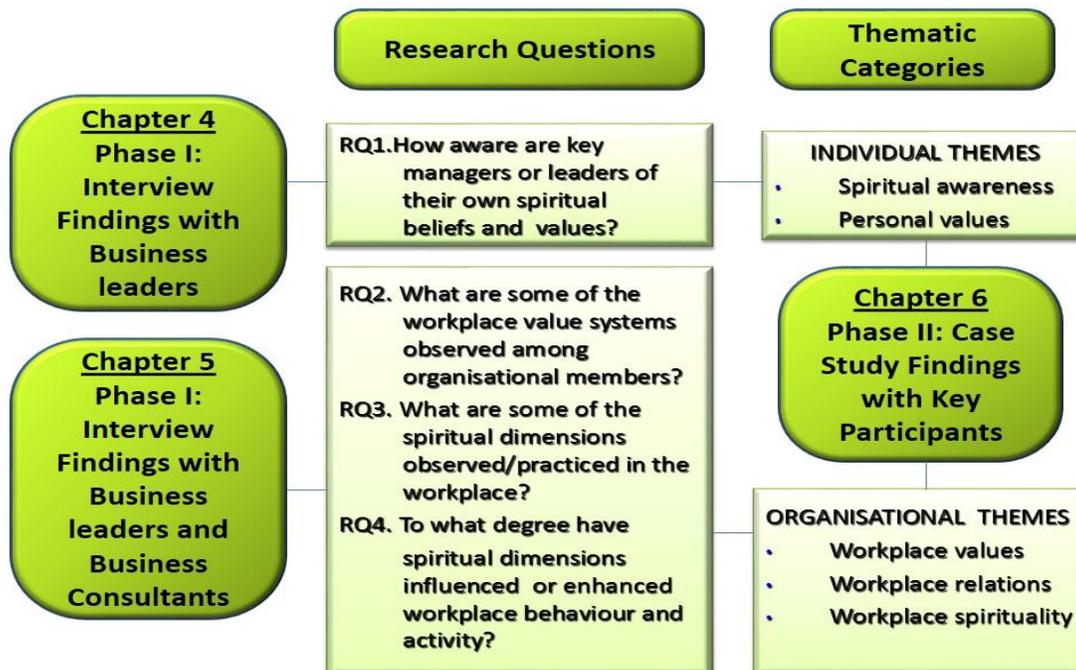


Figure 4.1 Research Questions and Thematic Categories

4.3 ADDRESSING RESEARCH QUESTION 1 IN PHASE I

This chapter reports on the findings of the first phase of data collection and primarily addresses the first research question;

RQ1: How aware are key leaders of their own spiritual beliefs and values.

In answering this question, it has to be ascertained that all participants in this research had a certain level of spiritual awareness to be considered for an in depth case study in Phase 2 of this research. This process enables the researcher to construct an understanding of each participant's personal (and unique) spiritual profile. The following section presents the general profiles of the

16 individuals who participated in Phase I. This is followed by a thematic analysis using raw quotations derived from the data collection to address RQ1.

4.4 PROFILE OF BUSINESS LEADERS AND CONSULTANTS

The following presents demographic and brief background information on all the participants in Phase I of this research project. In total sixteen interviews were conducted in Phase I. Twelve business leaders, six in Malaysia and six in Australia and a further four business management consultants, two in each country were interviewed. As described in the previous chapter a purposive sampling method was used in selecting these participants. All participants in Phase I are independent and unrelated to one another in any way and are individuals who held a genuine spiritual or religious belief or displayed a spiritual inclination or focus in their lives.

4.4.1 Profile of participants from Malaysia

Table 4.1 summarises the demographics of 8 interview participants of Phase 1 in Malaysia. Apart from brief bio-data the table also includes the type of organisations these business professionals manage and provides a brief status of their religious and/or spiritual beliefs.

DVE is the Executive Chairman of a business venture comprising a group of companies with regional offices in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. The business lines include telecommunications, lifestyle and leisure, luxury and collectibles, training and conference management, property development, global retail and direct sales business. His business also includes a philanthropic arm called XYZ Foundation which is engaged in corporate social responsibility activities around the world and also provides scholarships to deserving underprivileged students. This entrepreneur is also an author and a motivational speaker. In his late 40's he is married and has no children. He calls himself a global citizen, travelling

extensively and lives with his wife in homes in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Sydney and London. This participant is of Indian descent and Hindu by faith.

No.	Interviewee	Organisation Type	Age Range	Gender	Marital Status	Religious or Spiritual Belief
1	DVE Executive Chairman	Group of Companies	Late 40s	Male	Married	Hindu
2	JFFL Senior Retail Manager	Retail Store	Mid 50s	Male	Married	Currently a meditation practitioner. Previously Chinese idol worshipper and Buddhist.
3	JTP Regional Sales Manager	Multinational Pharmaceutical Firm	Early 50s	Male	Married	Christian
4	ZMS General Manager, Industrial Division	Diversified Group of Regional Companies in South East Asia (Technology)	Late 50s	Male	Married	Muslim
5	DTHTMI Executive Chairman	Project Management & Consultancy for Construction and Infrastructure Projects	Early 60s	Male	Divorced and re-married	Muslim
6	KM Managing Director	Landscape, Architecture and Design Firm	Late 40s	Female	Married	Hindu
7	KNA (Consultant) Group Chairman and Managing Director	HR Consulting Firm	Early 50s	Male	Married	Muslim
8	AZ (Consultant) Managing Director	Marketing, Training and Development Consultancy	Early 40s	Male	Unmarried but in a steady relationship	Muslim

Table 4.1 Profile of Malaysian Participants

JFFL is a Senior Retail Manager at a Malaysian-based company engaged manufacturing, retailing and marketing and distribution of branded apparels and garments to major departmental stores in West and East Malaysia. Considering retirement he is also currently engaged in authoring a book on his spiritual journey and belief being an active member in a Spiritual Foundation in Malaysia. JFFL is in his mid-50s, lives in Malaysia and is married to a school-teacher. They have five daughters, one of whom has cerebral palsy. JFFL is Chinese and was initially into Chinese idol worship, then explored the Buddhist faith and now draws inspiration

from the philosophies taught by his aging spiritual master based in Malaysia, who teaches a form of meditation called VCM.

JTP is a Regional Sales Manager for a multinational pharmaceutical firm, based in Malaysia, selling a wide product range from vaccines, over-the counter medicines to nutritional, oral- care and pharmaceuticals. This manager spends five days a week living out of a suitcase from a hotel in West Malaysia and returns to his home in East Malaysia every weekend. He is married with a nine year old daughter. JTP is in his early 50s and is a practising Christian who regularly attends church and engages in church related activities.

ZMS is a general manager trained in mechanical engineering who heads the industrial division of a Danish Group of Companies based in Malaysia. His business role involves representing leading world manufacturers to provide total solutions in turf care management on golf courses, parklands, stadiums and other public facilities throughout South East Asia. ZMS is a practising Muslim in his late 50s married with two adult children.

DTHTMI is the Executive Chairman of a leading firm which engages primarily in providing project management and construction management services to public and private clients in Malaysia. He has a strong project management team comprising local and international professionals of various disciplines in engineering, architecture, quantity surveying, building services, building technology and safety & health management. A respected public figure of the Indian-Muslim community DTHTMI is renowned to champion the cause of vernacular Tamil schools where a large number of students from under privileged backgrounds attend these under-funded schools in Malaysia. He is also a noted philanthropist, the founder of a Muslim Welfare organisation in a northern state in Malaysia and also advisor to several mosque committees, Indian Muslim Associations, as well as several youth and sports associations in Malaysia. He also is involved with an Islamic Centre for the Physically Handicapped in village in Sri Lanka.

DTHTMI is married and lives with his second wife of almost 20 years. Now in his 60s, he has an adult son from his previous marriage and an adopted daughter and a nine year old grandchild. He is a practising Muslim with a strong faith in the 5 tenets of the Islamic faith. This participant agreed to participate in the extended Phase 2 of this research involving an in-depth case-study.

KM is the only female participant interviewed in Malaysia. She is the Managing Director of a landscaping business with landscaping projects covering a range of services from initial concept design and consultancy to on-site implementation and maintenance of landscape projects of various types and scale all around Malaysia. KM in her late 40s is married with three children, two of whom are teenagers. She describes her lawyer husband as her business and spiritual partner and also as the inspirational stabilising pillar or rock in her life. KM is Hindu and frequently makes spiritual pilgrimages to India visiting holy sites and also is a keen observer of all Hindu religious festivals, rituals and rites.

The remaining two participants in Phase I are business consultants.

KNA is the Group Chairman and Managing Director of a Human Resource Consultancy firm providing HR support and services to local Malaysian and Malaysian-based companies, in areas such as mergers and acquisitions, organisational restructuring, team-building workshops, outplacement services and all areas of human resources related services. With many years of experience working in a multinational manufacturing and marketing services environment, KNA has played many regional roles in Asia and decided to establish his own consultancy firm with his wealth of experience working in many different industries in various business roles and capacities. KNA now in his 50s, is married with two children and also raising a nephew who lives with him and his family. He is a practicing Muslim who respects and embraces the multiracial and multi-religious traditions in Malaysia.

AZ is the Managing Director and Principal Consultant of his own Consulting firm which initially began as a marketing and advertising firm and later evolved into a human development and skills training company. His company offers soft-skills learning facilitators for multinationals, financial institutions, corporate organisations, small and medium industries and IT firms..AZ is an energetic entrepreneur, an optimist who believes in hope, purity and peace and the creative logo of his firm represents value, universality, truth, connection and knowledge. AZ is of the Islamic faith and has an interest in religious and spiritual traditions and often learns and quotes from spiritual leaders and philosophers of various faiths. He also has a keen interest in politics, people and nature. AZ's mission is to make the world a better place, one person at a time. AZ who speaks 4 languages is of Indonesian-Malay descent, and in his early 40s.

4.4.2 Profile of participants from Australia

The following table summarises the demographics of 8 interview participants of Phase I in Australia.**DMH** is an Associate Director Credit, Major Client Group of one of the major banks in Australia. She has been with the bank for 15 years, works in its headquarters in Melbourne, and considers herself middle management as there are 12 grades to the topmost of the bank's senior management hierarchy and she is on the 5th grade. A mother of 3 children ranging from ages 4 to 11 years, this participant held Christian spiritual beliefs which she thinks influences her personal code of conduct and how she treats her staff. She attends Church mainly to impart her values to her children.

JE(M) is a Senior Consultant at the Leadership Academy of one of the leading banks in Australia. JE(M) has been working in this bank for 26 years with a wide range of exposure in management of banking products, culture change, marketing, business banking, trade and project and sales dealership.

No	Interviewee	Organisation Type	Age Range	Gender	Marital Status	Religious or Spiritual Belief
	DMH Bank manager	Banking Firm	Early 40s	Female	Married	Uniting Church (previously Methodist and Presbyterian, now merged)
	JE(M) Senior Consultant	Leadership Academy, Banking	Mid 40s	Male	Married	Anglican Church. Not a regular attendee.
	NF Chairman and CEO	Green Energy Firm	Mid 40s	Male	Married	Ordained as an Anglican priest and later renounced. Advocate of “It is all about love”
	JE (F) Managing Director	Office Business Solutions Firm	Late 50s	Male	Married	Grew up as a Methodist but now a non-practicing Christian. Interested in all religions.
	IK Executive Chairman	Mining Firm	Early 60s	Male	Married	Meditator in the Evolutionary Enlightenment Movement
	AB Managing Director	Education Software Firm	Early 50s	Male	Married	Brought up with Presbyterian belief but now practice more of Buddhist teachings, Yoga and Meditation.
	RH Consultant	Consulting Services	Early 40s	Male	Married	Grew up Anglican. Has a personal relationship with God.
	SF Consultant	Consulting Services	Mid 40s	Female	In a steady relationship	Attraction to Indigenous (African) beliefs of a presence of a “Force” and won’t call it God, guided by an “Inner Purpose”

Table 4.2 Profile of Australian Participants

Currently he works in a team based structure as a member of Organisational Capability which is a Unit under the Human Resource Function of the bank which designs, manages and deliver training and development programs to build the capability of people within the senior ranks of the bank’s many branches. JE refers to himself as a Leadership Ambassador on Academy leadership and talent programs. In his mid-40s JE(M) married with 2 teenage daughters and attends the Anglican Church but not as regularly as he used to. JE(M) loves working with people to help take their leadership skills to next level and is very keen and interested with the

deep meaning of life and tries to integrate all aspects of his life with his own quiet and inner spiritual journey. This participant went on to participate in an extended Phase II of this research.

NF is the founder and Executive Chairman of a green energy company, a charismatic social entrepreneur and champion of using social enterprise in leading global market agenda to address big challenges in society, such as climate change and poverty. In his late 40's this participant is a frequent speaker at international events such as the World Economic Forum and a strong advocate on the convergence of business, personal ethics and social innovation. NF is also a former Anglican priest but eventually renounced his position in the Church and now focuses on his own personal mission – “It's all about love”. This participant is separated and a father of two children, a son and daughter who are his key inspiration to address huge causes that impacts the future generation and the planet. His key social concern is to cut greenhouse pollution emissions and to campaign for action on climate change.

JE (F) is the Owner Manager of a company which provides business solutions related to identification, labelling, occupational health and safety and general compliance signs. JE(F) is the main income-earner in the family and although her husband is the Director of the company, he made the unconventional choice of staying home as a house husband to take care of their two (now adult) daughters with disabilities, both of whom who have Asperger's Syndrome, a spectrum of autism disorder and confined to wheelchairs. JE(F) has many influences of the Christian tradition and experienced various sectarian conflicts when she chose to marry outside of her own Methodist Church to a Catholic. She says she is not a practicing Christian and is very interested in other religions and supportive of people's personal choices when it comes to the question of their faith.

IK is an Executive Chairman and Managing Director of a mining resources firm in Western Australia. IK is an economist with over 20 years' experience in the resource sector. He has

worked previously in the state government in industrial and resources sectors. IK also has worked as a consultant to these sectors undertaking projects with exploration and mining companies, investors and brokers. IK is in his early 60s, married with two adult children and four grandchildren. He meditates on the teachings of a spiritual master and founder of an enlightenment movement based in the US.

AB is the Managing Director of an e-learning solutions specialist company focusing on the education segment in Australia and New Zealand. This business provides leading software and information and communication technologies (ICT) tools to enhance the learning experience in the 21st century. An inspiring participant who is in his early 50s and married with four children, AB has a personal goal to unlock the power of young minds and their creative potential. His ambition is to see tens of thousands of people who are more engaged, wiser and have a more responsible attitude towards sustaining a non-violent and non-polluting quality of life on earth. AB lives life with purpose guided by a set of personal goals written down and constantly carried in his back pocket. He believes in co-creating his destiny by reaffirming his goals and regularly practicing yoga and meditation. The next two participants represent the business consultant sample from Australia.

RH is currently Director of Network Services and an executive coach as well as workplace facilitator in a consulting firm. His work involves developing leadership capability, sales performance, team effectiveness and individual awareness using an emotional intelligence assessment instrument, serving clients to the top 200 organisations in Australia. RH also has experience working in a boutique training and consultant procurement firm. He also is known for his research on human development, social entrepreneurship. He is a keen advocate of environmental issues and an explorer of spirituality and consciousness. In his early 40s, RH is married and is a father. RH believes he has a guardian angel that “talks” to him and is guided in

his life by the personal relationship he has with God. He does believe his early years were influenced by his parents who were Anglican and quite religious.

SF is a partner in a consulting practice which advocates an appreciative inquiry approach which draws on the strength and values of the individual and the organisation. The business focuses on various consulting packages such as leader and leadership development, women in management and leadership, strategies for the maturing and multigenerational workforce offering mentoring, coaching, professional development and supervision support to clients in a variety of business and services industry. SF has a partner, and has profound spiritual experiences with a “force” and is very interested in conversations such as “the evolution of consciousness”.

4.5 PHASE I – ESTABLISHING SPIRITUAL AWARENESS IN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The first research question set out to establish that participants were business leaders who clearly had an authentic expression or experience of an inner spiritual life, either through deep practice, belief or personal experience in the subject of spirituality. For this reason the first question on the interview protocol was purposively designed to set an introspective mood and tone in order to nudge the participant towards providing deeply and emotionally felt answers rather than mere shallow rational or pragmatic responses. Thus the first question on the Interview protocol was:

Q.1 Have you ever asked yourself this question - Who am I?

The positive responses provided by both the Eastern and Western participants to the above question clearly established that **all** participants in this research had reflected on this question to some extent. This outcome was largely anticipated as the technique of purposive sampling used to locate the participants to a large degree eliminated “non-introspective” participants. To be spiritual, an individual would have to be fairly self-reflective and have an introspective

disposition. Hence this result was anticipated and certainly desirable for the purpose of this study. The answers compiled also suggest that the participants chosen for this study had a relatively high interest in the subject discussed and were able to articulate on the tacit subject of spirituality. Some participants spoke as if they have clearly figured out their concept of Self while others reveal that it is an on-going question that leads often to more questions and they are yet to arrive at any satisfactory answer. It was however interesting to note at this very early stage of the research process there were already some clear distinctions emerging between the Eastern and Western sample.

4.5.1. Eastern responses to research question 1

Six business leaders interviewed in Malaysia were asked the following question:

Have you ever asked yourself this question – “Who Am I”?

For the Muslim respondents in Malaysia, this question has been addressed throughout their lives. This can be explained by the fact that religious education is mostly compulsory for children belonging to the Islamic faith. Noraini and Langgulung (2008) highlight that religious and moral education is a compulsory component of the national education system in Malaysia. They inform that Islamic religious education has been part of the school curriculum since 1962 prior to which it was mostly taught after school hours in religious institutions called ‘madrasahs’ or within mosques or Muslim chapels called ‘suraus’, and in many cases this practice continues even in the present. These authors cite the National Educational Philosophy under the National Economic Policy (NEP) which alludes to a holistic system of education so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on the firm belief in and devotion to God. This official policy is an effort by the Malaysian government to produce citizens who are not just knowledgeable and competent, but also possess high moral standards, resilient and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being

able to contribute to the betterment of the family, society and the nation at large. This clear reference to spirituality and religious belief and devotion to God as an important component of the educational philosophy is a typical norm in this Eastern culture. Hashim and Langgulung, (2008) explain that Islamic curriculum in Muslim countries is very important because it is not just a matter of acquiring knowledge for earning a living in this world or sharpening the intellect for economic pursuits but more important it is a means for the perfection of soul and for the purification of personality and wisdom. Thus the cultural relevance of religion ingrained through a religious education system in this Muslim state is apparent. This fact is clearly reflected in the responses from the two Muslim participants in this research in answering the first question on the interview schedule:

“Thankfully, my late parents ingrained Islamic values in me from the time I was 6 years old...and so with such a foundation it is easy to take for granted that I’m a Muslim... Then during my Pre-University education...on top of my regular classes I also attended religious education. At the same time I was exposed to my college mates of various religious denominations, each with his own practice... again I was confronted by this question (Who Am I) ...So my religious foundation and life experiences makes me strong in my values and faith - I pray 5 times a day and observe the 5 pillars of Islam and impart it to my family.”(DTHTMI)

(For full transcription to this answer by DTHTMI see Appendix 4.4.3.1)

The second Muslim participant from Malaysia provided a similar response:

“This question (Who am I?) is asked from the time we are young...usually from our religious background and upbringing. That’s where it started...In the past we are brought up that way, for example, I attended religious class from Standard One to Standard 6. In the evening we have the Quran class and also the religious teachers. So all our life this question is onto us. Also our parents practiced these values...such as proper manners, Malay customs such as how to treat your elders. So such upbringing leads us to what you are today. So it goes back to your upbringing ” . (ZMS)

(For full transcription to this answer by ZMS see Appendix 4.4.3.2)

The responses from the Muslim participants highlight that the Islamic values were well structured and instituted among the Muslim community in Malaysia. The reflection on self was equally present among participants of the other faith as seen from the responses below:

“All the time. Its part and parcel of the evolution of a human being. The question one should ask one’s self...at least yearly, if you’re more motivated you’d be doing it monthly..About 1% of humanity would ask themselves this question everyday...Where am I? Who Am I? Why am I here? Where do I go from here?” (DVE)

DVE who is a Hindu, suggests the question “Who am I?” is an evolutionary question that ought to be asked by every human being. DVE bemoans the fact that only a small number of humanity engage in such level of introspection. Although in this response DVE makes no link to a religious or spiritual connotation, he positively associates his deep self to a spiritual and religious link in his responses to subsequent questions. Other participants included God in the equation of their self as depicted in the next two excerpts. JFFL is a regular meditator while JFL is a staunch Christian:

“Who am I? Basically I think I will say that I have a special mission in this world in relation to what I believe spiritually...that there is a purpose for me in this world. For I think we are basically children of God and that’s the reason why we are here. And for me who I am actually carries the values in me, what I believe, my principles, and how I would practice my principles in my day to day living. ” (JTP)

Accordingly another participant of Hindu faith, KM relates that religious practices such as pilgrimages to holy sites (local or abroad) can help individuals figure out the “I” or self. KM relates that she began asking this question “Who am I?” at age 21, and now in her mid – 40s she continues to seek an answer to this question:

“Oh yes, yes. My yearly trip to Thiruvanamalai [a place of holy pilgrimage in India] is all about the search for answers to this question. Many times but not truly am I able to answer the question from the spiritual point of view. [It is] very easy to answer from a material stand, you know, physical point of view, but from a spiritual point of view, well

that is the question that I'm asking every day and if I have found that answer I won't be here talking to you right now.”(KM)

From all the responses of the above six Malaysian participants, it was fairly obvious that they were all very comfortable in addressing this question. They also appeared to have a good understanding and grasp of the depth of the question. Of the six respondents the eastern sample, five make a clear reference to their respective religious beliefs or mention ‘God’ in their evaluation of this introspective question – “Who am I”? In fact the only participant who did not mention the God-factor in this question makes clear references to the concept in subsequent questions. This finding suggests from the onset that overwhelmingly individuals in the East appear to naturally invoke a transcendental or religious connotation beyond the material world when analysing the concept of I or Self. This compares quite differently to the answers derived from the Western sample that follow.

4.5.2 Western responses to research question 1

The majority of the Western participants did not relate the question of “Who am I?” neither to a religious nor spiritual dimension. Their ideas of “I” or the “self” are seemingly linked to their secular life goals and purposes in the here and now, citing their relationships to other people, to society and their purpose on the planet. For example:

“It’s an on-going question. I’ve always sort of asked, maybe as a teenager you want to know who you are as far as you fit into society, from the family perspective, and even just personally to work out what you want to do with your life. I’ve stopped and asked; Who am I? What do I want to be? Also in goal-setting, trying to work out who you are and who you come to be going forward I suppose. I have not found the answer to this question yet. I am still looking. I have some guidelines on who I am and how I behave, and who I kind of perceive I want to be, but I don’t think I know who I am. No.” (DMH)

“Yeah I suppose, I tend to think of it. What am I about, what am I here for? What is it all about? What is the person I should be? What is the...it’s almost like what is the value I can add or how can... what, what, is the purpose for me and how should I be kind of leaving the world a better place.” (JE (M))

A demanding lifestyle and a focus on the more practical aspects of life (such as two adult children with disabilities and special needs) does not permit her time for such deep reflection according to the following participant:

“Probably a question I have not fully answered. And probably I haven’t really dwelt on it a lot. It’s something I hear a lot of other people talk about; you know, they need to find themselves; they need to know who they are. Probably my lifestyle doesn’t allow me a lot of time to dwell on things like that. I tend to be fairly practical. And my family situation is such that I basically need to get on and get things done and all of that. So it’s probably something I can’t give you a great answer...And I see myself as, obviously a business person providing an income for my family, and hopefully some enjoyment in life as well. ... For myself probably, I’m really simply satisfied with who I am, I wasn’t always but I think that at my age now I think that I’ve got used to who I am and accepted who I am. It is a really hard question to answer.” (JE (F))

One participant clearly disassociates himself from religion, believing it did not allow him to explore the various dimensions of himself that he stood for. In fact this participant redefined the question for himself and suggest that the question the interviewer ought to be asking is not “Who am I?” but rather “Is there more I can love, is there more I can accept?”

“I wouldn’t name it “who am I”. I think in interpreting who you are... the question for me is... Is there more I can love and is there more that I can accept? So in terms of those kinds of flip signs saying God is love... I think the whole religious thing is about people have epiphanies when they fall in love with the other, with life, with things, not just another person. Most of us only experience it with another person. I mean you are physical about it but I see this thing falling in love and I think life is about that falling. And that you have to let go of things to fall, don’t you? You have to fall when you are holding on. You have to let go. So I just found myself leaving my religion because it was not helping me fall.” (NF)

Only one western participant (IK) makes a reference to ‘consciousness’ and an ‘experience with the Absolute’, suggesting a reference of I or Self involves a dimension beyond the physical which he names as the *Absolute*:

“Yes, I have. I am consciousness itself. Through Andrew Cohen’s [a spiritual guru based in the US] meditational teachings I have this awareness. I am a student of his. I started about 3 years ago. In the last 12 months my spiritual pursuit has become more profound. It’s an experience with the Absolute. It is the context for my relationship to everything that I experience. It’s a very profound experience. It does not have a separate sense of self. It is the context for all my actions and activities. It’s not there all the time as I do lapse back to the egoic state too. It does take effort to have the intention to be free from the separate sense of self. Much effort.” (IK)

This next participant who has taken to Buddhist teaching despite not being religious prior suggest that for some people a deep questioning of self can happen at a later stage in life, even without early religious education or indoctrination:

“I ask this question every second day. My journey has been about working out my purpose on this planet to be the best that I can be and give value to people around me. I try to achieve my full potential.” (AB)

Thus the twelve business leaders interviewed in Phase I indicate a high level of awareness on the deep question of self. The question “Who am I?” is as many participants have implied in their response, a very difficult philosophical question to explore. However, any effort in exploring this question indicates an individual who has begun an introspective journey towards understanding his inner dimensions and purpose beyond mere physical existence in the world. The excerpts in this section clearly established that all the participants in this research have reflected on the question of their Self. This was an important criterion that had to be met for the focus of this research.

The most interesting difference observed when the 1st question was analysed was that five out of six business leaders from the Eastern sample co-related the notion of I or Self with

transcendental meanings relating to a religious or spiritual belief and practice and the exact opposite was true for the Western participants. Despite the distinct differences in responses to this question “Who am I?” between the Eastern and Western sample, it is important to clarify at this point that this observation does not necessarily imply that the Western participants were not spiritual, but simply when they were reflecting on the concept of I or the self, most did not make a link to a transcendental concept. It is however an early indication of how the concept of spirituality and religiosity is very highly intertwined in the identity of individuals from the Eastern culture and perhaps less so for individuals in the Western scenario.

4.6 EMERGENT PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL THEMES

This section introduces the key personal and organisational themes that emerged from the data analysed. These four keywords were considered appropriate proxies for the subject of interest and were used to categorise the questions asked in the interview protocol. The data was then coded to four general themes in line with the design of the interview schedule as follows:

Emergent Themes	
Personal Themes	1. Spiritual Awareness 2. Personal Values
Organisational Themes	3. Workplace Values 4. Workplace Spirituality

Table 4.3 Emergent Themes

4.6.1 Emergent personal thematic categories

Table 4.3 presents the emergent personal themes for:

1. Spiritual awareness
2. Personal values

Table 4.4 in the following page captures the emergent personal thematic categories of the 12 business leaders and 4 consultants interviewed in Phase I. The remaining two organisational

themes (workplace values, and workplace spirituality) will be addressed from a multi-dimensional perspectives covering key participants (three key business leaders from Phase I) and their working associates and family members who participated in an extended case-study in Phase II of this research. These will be covered in-depth in chapter 6.

Categories of Themes	Categories	Sub-categories
Spiritual awareness	Spirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Definition of Spirituality •Triggers to Spiritual Awareness •Consciousness •Sense of well-being •Tolerance of differences •Sensitivity to cultural differences •Meaning and purpose in Life •Connectedness
	Religiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •God •Distinction of Spirituality vs. Religiosity •Religious Diversity •Celebration of religious events •Facility for religious practices •Rites and Rituals •Prayer •Legal & Moral Implications
Personal values	Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Trust •Truthfulness
	Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Caring •Respect •Kindness •Communication •Humility

Table 4.4 Emergent Personal Themes from Phase I

4.6.1.1 Emergent thematic categories for spiritual awareness

Not surprisingly, the main emergent categories for spiritual awareness was spirituality and religiosity represented in column two in the Table 4.4. These two categories (2nd column) and subcategories (3rd column) were derived from analysis of Phase I data. The emerging categories of themes for spiritual awareness were not unforeseen as the emphasis on clarifying the concept of spirituality and religiosity was a key step in Phase I, thus interviews were designed to ascertain that participants were individuals who had an in-depth interest on these topics and were able to

make a distinction between the two concepts. This is important as spirituality as a concept is notoriously difficult to define let alone comprehend.

4.6.1.2 Emergent thematic categories for personal values

The thematic categories for Personal Values were classified under the broad values of Integrity and Love as shown in Column 2, Table 4.4. Value items under the sub-categories (Column 3 in Table 4.4) will be used to contrast organisational values to see if these personal values held by the 12 business leaders are consistent and congruent to organisational values they perceived to be important for their respective work organisations (discussed in Chapter 5). To establish the most important personal values held by research participants the following question was asked;

Q.5: What are the values that are most important to you personally?

The two main personal thematic categories of integrity and love will be further utilised to observe if the same values in the personal value sub-categories re-appear in the organisational themes. If they do repeat, it will prove that values held strongly within the interior personal domain of the individuals are the same values that are perceived to be important to these leaders in their expectations of themselves and others in the exterior domain of their respective workplaces. This will be assessed in Chapter 5. Most participants informed that their personal values were derived through a combination of life experiences such as societal, cultural and family influences and were not able to clearly state which of these were more relevant, preferring to cite all as having contributed towards their value formation. It can be safely assumed therefore that spiritual beliefs held through family and socio-cultural traditions directly or indirectly influences the personal values held by participants. A few participants however had certain role-models, often family members whom they looked up to in their childhood and so they credit their current held values to those role-models.

4.6.2 Defining Spirituality

In deliberating the relevance of spirituality in organisational leadership, the first obvious task is in defining the concept of spirituality. This study explored this task with participants in Phase I. Defining spirituality is already established to be problematic (Mohamed, Hassan, and Wisnieski, 2001; Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002; Howard 2002; Brown 2003). When dealing with a non-physical dimension of an individual's interior perception, defining the abstract concept of spirituality becomes a complex and often controversial matter. Complex because it consists of an intricate combination of interconnected and interwoven elements, that is meant to be studied as a whole. Controversial because it involves a variety of beliefs that is not necessarily shared among individuals or groups of individuals thus pitting one viewpoint against another giving rise to biasness or conflicts of interest which in turn could arouse suspicion, fear and anxiety over which viewpoint is valid or more superior. This difficulty is already evident in the literature review. The literature on workplace spirituality offers little commonality in definitions, indicating the highly subjective nature of this concept. Section 2.2 in Chapter two offers a detailed discussion on the various definitions of this word as well as feature an in-depth assessment of the distinction between spirituality and religion.

In summary, the main-stream academic literature on spirituality in the workplace which predominantly originates from and is focussed on the Western viewpoint makes a clear distinction between religion and spirituality, often preferring to distance from the religious (God-centred) whilst embracing the concept of spirituality(life-centred) as the more broadly inclusive and universal. There are sceptical or cynical viewpoints questioning the role of both religion and spirituality in the workplace (Brown, 2003; Benefiel, 2003). Although the literature on spirituality in the workplace is growing and gaining acceptance, on the contrary religion in the workplace is often presented in negative tones to be either renegade or potentially radical. Mitroff,

a pioneering scholar in this subject area of spirituality in corporate America, in the late 90's, clearly draws this negative distinction in his article entitled "Do not Promote Religion under the Guise of Spirituality" (Mitroff, 2003). Is this critical and harsh stand on religion in the workplace Western phenomenon? This research aims to investigate if this position is merely a reductionist rationalism of Western viewpoints or indeed a universal phenomenon. This cross-cultural study presents the opportunity to consider this question to see if a universal definition of spirituality emerges from the data. The following presents the responses of participants from the Eastern cohort in this research to see if the phenomena of spirituality and religiosity being separate and distinct might be universally representative.

4.6.2.1 Defining Spirituality – Eastern responses

The following are responses to the question:

How would you define spirituality?

The following captures various responses from participants in the Eastern cohort. As previously mentioned, the unique intrinsic personal experience of individuals is validated in the Heuristic design. Therefore the range of responses received to this question is equally valid in every instance, based on different experiences of the variety of personalities interviewed. They represent a variety of different racial and religious denominations. For most participants, defining spirituality was a difficult endeavour. Many had to think a while, reflecting on the question before venturing to answer.

*"Define it?...Well it is an essence, an awareness. It's an awareness of one's spiritual form, which would include one's spiritual goals, one's spiritual needs and most important of all one's relationship with the rest of mankind and with the Lord – that would cover it."
(DVE)*

“Spirituality to me is to have or to seek a greater awareness of yourself, of your relationship of yourself and God and fellow human beings and the entire Universe. In its absolute sense - not in the relative sense. We must be able to imbibe the true essence of what God intended for us, who God is, what He wants from us, what He expects from us. If one is able to seek, and know and practice and have a better understanding and appreciation of this, you can live your life on earth more meaningfully. So spirituality in short is to have a real understanding of yourself and your relationship with God.” (JFFL)

“I think spirituality is basically when you have God in mind, and you believe that your God is the provider, your God is your over-comer. Your God will take you through in good times and in bad times. Spirituality to me means you give thanks in all situations be it bad or good. And of course spirituality also means relationship. It’s all about relationship with God and relationship with people? And to practice a relationship whereby because God loves you and in return you want to love back people because that will please God.” (JTP)

The three participants above define spirituality as an essence, awareness, an inner dimension in the mind that links to a relationship with others and with God. Then there are others who attempt to describe the spiritual-religious conflicts that may occur, such as the response below by a Muslim participant who articulates the distinction as follows;

“Spirituality involves a few things. Number one, one’s religion, then there are other considerations such as one’s own principles, attitude towards the environment, legal considerations and so on. For instance being spiritual in my religion demands that I need to pray 5 times a day – so being pious, at 1pm if I strictly follow my religious duty I must stop to pray, but by the rules and regulations of the organisation, also principle wise, I can’t simply do that. I need to be flexible. I remain spiritual even though I’m not always able to fulfil my religious obligations. But then you have some extremist who insist on doing so (no matter what), without considering the environment or legal implications of his work, it’s not practical, not workable. So spirituality covers a lot of things in life. It ultimately goes back to the individual, how one deal with one’s own spiritual demands. I hope that answers your question.” (ZMS)

ZMS cites that he remains spiritual even though there might be instances when he may not be able to fulfil his religious obligations for practical reasons. In his response he also denounces the extremist attitudes of some religious fanatics who insist on being rigid with their religious practices which he concedes may not be practical or conflict with work pressures or demands. Thus indirectly this participant acknowledges that there is potential for conflicts between an individual's religious beliefs and workplace expectations especially if individuals are rigid and uncompromising on their religious beliefs. He clarifies that being spiritual is above just performing religious duties as he qualifies that if he fails to perform his religious prayers, it does not diminish his spiritual nature.

“Spirituality...I think it starts with inner peace. The very basis for spirituality is inner peace and the other thing is contentment. Self-contentment. I think, once you are not contented, then everything else goes out of control...When I say inner peace, it may not be 100%. At the end of the day, you tell yourself, I think I've done a good day's job and I've been helpful to some people, which ultimately generates peace within you...it breaks a lot of sorrow within you and you feel relaxed and the peacefulness within. Similarly with contentment, as I reflect and think I have more than enough, I'm contented. My problem with contentment is not because I don't make enough for myself, no, no, no. My problem is I want to do so much more (for others), but I only have this much. There's where my conflict and problem starts.” (DTHTMI)

The participant above (DTHTMI) is well-known for his philanthropy, particularly in helping educational efforts for children in underprivileged communities in Malaysia. His definition of spirituality is scoped within the context of what he thinks; he needs to further do, to help this cause which he is highly passionate about. He then frames his community engagement as bringing him peace and contentment and thus his definition of spirituality is linked to his altruistic social work in the community. Although in his definition of spirituality he implies that it results in inner peace and contentment and makes no mention of his religious beliefs. However, there was ample evidence to suggest that this participant overtly expressed his religious traditions.

This can even be observed in his attire in the office, wearing a traditional “jubah” (long flowing robe akin to Arabic garment) and “songkok” (a traditional Malay hat generally used by men to perform prayers at the mosque). He also spoke about spirituality in God-centred tones elsewhere during the interview. Another participant (KM) indicates that spirituality is to do with life not merely a God-centred concept.

“Spirituality. I can’t define it. It’s your whole life experience, what you think, what you feel and what you practice in life. It’s not related to any particular book or theory on God. Spirituality is a wholesome part of everything you are and everything you do.” (KM)

KM is a devout Hindu who has a prayer altar in her office and ample symbols of Hinduism and statues of Hindu idols around her office and also in her home. When the researcher visited her nursery (on a country-site about 60km from her office) where she cultivates the garden and aquatic plants for her landscaping business, it was observed that this participant also had a Hindu temple built on the farm where daily religious rites and rituals are performed by an employee who is a care-taker at the farm and who doubles as the temple priest to perform holy rites at the temple. In her response to define spirituality, she points out that it is not merely a knowledge or theory based definition of God, but an experiential one. So similar to the previous participant although she is again overtly religious, performing various Hindu rites and practices, she also clearly articulates that spirituality is beyond just religious beliefs and is able to distinctly articulate the difference and yet not see a conflict between being religious or spiritual.

The above responses clearly indicate when the strong cultural influence of religious traditions remain sway in a society such as in Malaysia, practically all participants refer to a God-centred notion of spirituality which implies that religion and spirituality go hand in hand. This result challenges the generally disapproving Western perspective on religion within the context of modern workplaces as it doesn’t apply universally particularly when considered within a non-western context. In the present globalised world, religious diversity is a reality where cross-

disciplinary and trans-disciplinary cultures collide on a daily basis. In the tragic aftermath of religious terrorism such as the 9-11, Bali-bombing and various chaos-causing extremist activity in the world, evidence abound that it has unfortunately given rise to religious intolerance and distrust against many religious traditions from a variety of world cultures, further fuelling western secularism. Yet a secularist Western perspective may not necessarily represent the realities of other cultures as seen here from non-Western lenses. The lists of definitions provided by the Eastern cohort above clearly indicate a non-secularist perspective. It shows that in the Malaysian context as commonly found in many parts of the Eastern world, religion forms an integral feature of a total culture and society.

4.6.2.2 Defining Spirituality – Western responses

While the Eastern participants showed a strong mooring to the religious culture they were born into, the Western participants on the other hand showed a lack of strong roots to their inherited tradition, often making choices to explore other traditions, exercising the freedom and the right to choose that which appeals to their individual interest regardless of any hallowed tradition their parents or ancestors held. As the findings show, many Westerners simply moved away from traditional organised religion simply because it was “not fashionable to be religious”.as one participant (JE)M revealed, adding that it occurs particularly around the early teenage years, where there was clear peer pressure and influence ‘not to attend church’. The following are responses from the Western cohort, who were deliberately chosen to be of Anglo-Saxon origin from Australia. This was to ensure migrants of Asian or Eastern origin who populate Australia were not included purely to maintain a strictly Western view-point. The following are excerpts to the same question, from Western participants on their definition of spirituality.

“Spirituality.... I don’t really know. It’s what you believe in, and who you believe in as a higher being or influence in your life. Spirituality isn’t necessarily associated with one god or one religion. I think every religious group has their own form of that spirit. I presume, every church like my own have their own interpretations. But I still tend to see spirituality as sort of an Asian-Indian influence. It’s bizarre. I don’t know. It’s my preconceived thing – it’s a strong feeling....When I think spirituality, that’s just what I think....More so, when I think in terms of my own background...and my religious experience, I don’t quite see that as spiritual. I wouldn’t use the word spiritual.” (DMH)

DMH clearly was struggling to articulate her thoughts to define spirituality and she curiously felt that spirituality was an “Asian-Indian” influence and she did not see it in her own religious background, of the Uniting Church. She clarifies a bit further when she contemplates on the concept of God later (see section 4.5.1.4).

“Spirituality....I think it’s that feeling that there is something else there with you...or in you. Yes. In you...Yes, that you actually can feel “that” in you.” (JE[M])

JE(M) although appeared a bit vague with his answer, he tried to clarify it further in the next section when questioned on the concept of God. The previous two excerpts clearly depict the difficulty of articulating a clear definition for a subtle concept. This shows that when people discuss spirituality, they generally speak of the concept in no clear terms, as it means different things to different people. Many people like the two participants above have difficulty providing a clear meaning on this tacit subject. The next participant however provided a curt and clear definition. He had an indignant sense of certainty and sureness about his definition;

“Spirituality....is the search for love.”(NF)

NF is a former Anglican priest. At the time of the interview he was in the process of publishing a book. The draft of the book was made available to the researcher. It details the resignation of NF as a priest from the Church citing that his journey towards being more loving as the most important thing he does is not fundamentally supported by the church. In the draft he cites “Mostly it (the church) is indifferent to any real exploration of love and its consequences.

But sadly, and in great measure, it is part of the problem, and in the case of the growing fundamentalist movement; abusive to individuals and damaging to the chance of healthy, loving communities.” The damning verdict by this former priest provides not for sensationalism of issues concerning “the church”, but for the purpose of this research becomes a valuable resource that provides an insider viewpoint of failings of organised religion in some given instances. This rare insider account of a former priest is not isolated, as abuse happening in churches has had frequent coverage in the media in recent times. It provides some plausible reasons for a new age spiritual movement taking place in Western societies whereby faith is lost in religious institutions and many are turning away from organised religion as dramatically depicted by NF, a priest ordained in 1996 who resigned after 12 years, and now is a successful business and social entrepreneur. NF has been recognised as a Schwab Foundation social entrepreneur and attends the World Economic Forum in this capacity. This participant makes a highly interesting subject for this research enquiry as he has ample direct experience in the areas of (Christian) religious activity; he has also worked and headed various charities, and is a strong advocate of social entrepreneurship. He has also previously published a book in 2008, which conveys the message that charity can never deliver a just and sustainable world. He advocates that social change can only be driven through a value-centred market economy. His for-profit environmental and social purpose business enterprise is a green energy firm dedicated to drive environmental change globally. So NF’s definition of spirituality is love-centred (or life-centred) rather than God-centred. The next participant, JE (F), did struggle to begin answering this question, taking her time she responded:

“Oh Boy! Spirituality....God...well, certainly religious beliefs would play a big part. If you follow religion...Or ...it might be a ...for those who believe in a higher being...am not sure what you call it...but it is not religion as such. You know...people that are like the psychics and more like the new age stuff. So yeah...so I guess your philosophy about life and very much the deepest thoughts that you have about the purpose of life and your role in life,

which is more than a part of the human race. It is part of being...I'm not sure how far it goes...the universe?...maybe it goes beyond even that...but I don't know.” (JE[F])

Perhaps the most earnest of all responses came from JE(F) when she finally qualifies her definition, by adding “I don't know”. However, in her response, she articulates that she thinks religious belief plays a big part but in her definition of spirituality she also ventures to suggest that it could be beyond just religion or goals and purpose of human life, saying it is a dimension that goes far beyond the conceivable Universe. The next participant highlights how he exercised his right to choose his religious faith.

“I was brought up influenced by the Presbyterian Church...but then eventually moved away from it and now I follow more of Buddhist teachings, through my interest in Yoga. I read a lot on Buddhism and so am inclined to the Buddhist concept of spirituality.” (AB)

Most of the Western participants had some difficulty with the definition of spirituality, many admitting that they do not know what it means and most displaying hesitation and uncertainty in their responses. One participant flatly refused to use the term spirituality favouring instead to replace the word with “love”, another participant thought that spirituality was a word she wouldn't use to describe her religious associations at the Uniting Church she attends and saw the concept as one of an “Asian-Indian” influence. Out of the six Western participants five no longer associate with the religious tradition they were brought up in, some choosing to explore entirely different religions, while one had adopted a meditative practice in a New Age movement. It showed that Western respondents could easily detach from tradition to adopt new age spiritualities, rejecting the authorities of the Church to exercise their own reason, conscience or intuition to experientially explore and seek the spirit or higher Self within.

4.6.3 Religiosity – The God factor

The previous result indicates that the religious cultural moorings of the Eastern participants were remarkably resilient, thus religious ideas and ideals promoted within their cultural heritage

from early childhood is deeply ingrained and valued even upon maturity. These values are maintained through a rich religious and cultural texture, continuously coached and transferred to the next generation through a complex web of rich ceremonies, ancient art-forms and celebration of cultural religious festivals to inspire and encourage the young to appreciate their respective ethnic heritage. This Eastern cultural inheritance whether from Islamic, Chinese or Indian civilisation historically extends thousands of years back. These civilisations existed long before Western civilisation took hold through economic and technological dominance in the world (Woodhead, 2002). Thus it can be observed that historical heritage till this day is a source of strong cultural values in the Eastern world. Malaysia's immigrant population seem to link back in time to historical heritages of their ancestral land, outside of this nation-state. An example of this can be clearly observed in the responses of one participant (DVE) when he provides an elaborate historical account of his cultural heritage from mainland India (see section 4.5.3). Another indicator of religious cultural depth of a society can be seen in the celebrated festivities of a nation. A quick scan of the calendar year in Malaysia shows 12 days dedicated as public holidays linked to religious festivities recognised and celebrated by its citizens. By comparison in Australia, 3 days were public holidays of religious significance; Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Christmas. When a few Western participants were asked about the significance of these religious based holidays, they did not even identify the holidays as religious but more as an occasion to socialise with friends and family. One participant jokingly commented that the only religious event in Melbourne is the AFL (Australian Football League) finals referring to the strong footy and sports culture in Australia. To highlight what might be the difference of perception between Eastern and Western participants when it came to religiosity, the following question on the concept of God was posed:

Do you believe in God? Describe your understanding of this concept.

4.6.3.1 The concept of God – Eastern responses

The following are responses for participants from Malaysia. It is clear from some of these responses that many believed God is a given fact and a few participants displayed intense emotional feelings when answering the question displaying passion for the concept of God. Some others equally expressed disdain for ‘non-believers’ of God as seen clearly by the answer provided by DVE below. Himself a devout Hindu, DVE chides that ‘non-believers’ in fact simply “don’t want to believe” because they are afraid of the perception of a judging God from whom there is no escape. In his response he clarifies his position on God, and his opinion of the non-believers of God. (See Appendix 4.6.3.1)

Other participants describe God as an existing presence in all of creation, alluding to the idea that God is present in every being, good or bad. JFFL, although not a Christian himself, interestingly cites the (Christian) scriptures, which says “Love Thy Enemy”. KM who is a Hindu describes God as the higher energy in all beings and as a concept that represents all good values in life.

“God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is the perfect one, the supreme creator. Words or anything cannot describe God to you. But I believe if once you know God you will be able to feel, see, God in each and every of his creation. Omnipresent means he is present everywhere. Even in a killer, even in a murderer, in every atom, even in the enemy. That’s why it is said “Love thy enemy” why? Didn’t the scriptures say that? I am no supporter of any scripture but I am a supporter of all scriptures. How can God ask me to love my enemy who betrayed me, cheated me etc? Because even in the enemy God is also present there.” (JFFL)

“Yes - God is a higher energy - comes in different forms and deities. Also comes in the form of mother, small infants, and all beings. God represents all that brings good values into my life to teach me something.” (KM)

Similarly, JTP describes God in the context of the Christian faith, citing God the Ultimate gave his son Lord Jesus Christ to provide Salvation to humanity and the promise of an Eternal life after the transition from earthly life where one is reunited with the Lord.

“God of course is the All Mighty. I’m a Christian I think my God actually is a God that is the Ultimate who gave us his only begotten son, there is no other God greater than the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us and got himself, resurrected to fulfil the will of the Father God and so that we are all saved if we believe in Him. Yes we have salvation and we have eternal life. Eternal life means - basically life on earth is only a transit point if you leave this life you’re going to an eternal life that you’ll be at, you meet the Lord.”
(JTP)

ZMS who practices the Islamic faith described God as taught in the Islamic tradition but qualifies that non-Muslims too believe in something and he feels that despite religious beliefs being different in form, in a variety of different religions, he reckons the concept of God is principally the same in all - teaching all to be good.

“God...It’s something that you believe in... this is not by chance.. No, I don’t think that you believe in God just because you’re a Muslim, then only you believe in God...No. Even though you may not be born as a Muslim...I believe in Prophet Mohamed but others like a Hindu, a Christian etc, there is some other belief...you’ll still believe in something. Everyone believes in something...that’s right. I don’t think any religion teaches one to be bad. So to me regardless of our different religious beliefs, principle wise we all believe in God. Some similarities might be there, for e.g. as Muslims we fast (during the holy month of Ramadan), Christians also fast, so do Hindus...so everything taught in different religious beliefs is only for good of all. That’s what I feel.” (ZMS)

The other Muslim participant DTHTMI describes God as the Creator and used the words omnipotence and omnipresent in describing God. These words were also used by JFFL. Omnipotent in the Oxford dictionary is defined as “having ultimate power”, omnipresent is defined “as being present everywhere at the same time” and omniscient is defined as “all knowing” (Oxford Dictionaries Online).

“God...is the Creator who is, in my understanding...He is omnipotent, He is omnipresent”.
(DTHMI – See Appendix 4.6.3.1 or full excerpt)

When pressed to explain these two concepts of omnipotent and omnipresent, DTHTMI provided an elaborate account of 5 clear incidences in his life when he escaped death (twice by missing flights which crashed, with no survivors) and three other occasions when he’s had road accidents, although seriously injured in one, hurting his spine and ankle (to this day he walks with a limp and with an aid of a walking stick), and when doctors had given up hope, he survived. So the close calls with death and many other instances which he claims were impossible happenings in his life has proven to him of the presence of divine intervention. He says it was prayers of those who loved him that pulled him through all his difficult ordeals. He states, he just knows that the Divine is with him at all times and he has complete faith in Him. So for this participant, the divine principle is of a God with whom he has a personal relationship which is experiential including a God who intervenes in his life to save him from difficult circumstances. It was a common thread among the Eastern participants when confronted with the concept of God most defended God as a principle quite personal to themselves, whether citing God as a respected authoritative figure such as in the cited examples of Jesus Christ the Lord or Prophet Muhammad to be united with, in the after-life, while others saw God as a presence to be individually experienced and known in the here and now and not simply as an afterlife phenomenon.

4.6.3.2 The concept of God – Western responses

Interestingly, all participants except one said they believed in God. More interestingly the one participant who didn’t believe in God was the former Anglican priest. He insisted that this concept is simply the search for love within all individuals and he has come to the conclusion that he doesn’t know if an unknown “force” called God or for that matter other lives or ghost or heaven or hell even exist as it’s not in his experience. He rationalises that most people are

unwilling to take responsibility for this internal search for love within and so they often accord it to an “external force” called God or something.

“Yeah, right. Concept of God is love... so when people say I met God, I asked them what they feel about it. They have experienced feeling open, their heart is open. They feel content, they feel placed and grounded. They feel loved.” (NF)

It was highly fascinating to hear NF’s view of God, particularly because he spent 12 years as a “Man of God” in the Anglican Church. His account could be due to his own disillusionment with the failings of the Church that culminated in his eventually resignation. But all other participants said they believed in God. Each however had various understanding of the concept. Among the Western participants there was only one person who kept to her family’s religious tradition of heritage. DMH conceded that her understanding of God is based on what her Church’s portrayal of God is.

“My understanding of God is what I’ve learnt through the Uniting Church and with that my understanding of God is through what the Uniting Church portrays God to be... I have a lot of Jewish clients who have a different version of what God is. And I spent loads of time in Japan and they had very different ideas of what God is...Also Hindus, Buddhist, idea of what God was compared to what I believe...I think God is an ultimate higher being in whatever religion you pick rather than my god or your god, his god or her god.”(DMH)

Despite admitting that her understanding of God is based on the interpretation of her Church, she displays a rational enquiry on the subject and adds that she is aware there are other conceptions of God in other religious traditions which she conceded is very different to her own belief system and so she concludes that God is an ultimate being, a supreme energy for all and concludes that it doesn’t matter which conception is accurate. Another participant who is a regular meditator sees the God factor as an internal phenomenon that he describes as deep consciousness.

“God is a deep consciousness...a deep connection to the self.” (IK)

Another participant concurs with the previous that the God factor is within the individual but adds a further dimension that it could also be an external factor to the individual in his response:

“Boy [long pause] I guess it is that spirit in you, that... and with you and also the spirit looking down on you sort of like all those dimensions in one.” (JE [M])

The next participant expressed the difficulty she was having in answering this question as her practical logical side demands scientific reasoning of facts and figures and since there was none for God, she concedes that the God factor is beyond her understanding. She adds that no one truly knows. Yet she adds that if God did exist then it must be the same God for all, only referred to with different names.

“Yeah. [long pause] I don’t think anyone might even understand [God]. A lot of it goes into belief and trust...Yes I think that’s so for most people anyway. ...And I do believe that we all believe in the same one, we just got different names for Him.” (JE[F])

One participant referred to God as a universal concept:

“I believe God is a Universal energy.” (AB)

In observing the responses to the posed question, it is clear that the God factor is deeply questioned amongst the Western participants and not simply assumed to exist as appeared to be the case with the Eastern participants. Westerners often spoke about the God concept in the individualistic language or terminology of the “I” or “self” factor, easily observed in the tendency to use the 1st person language when describing the God phenomenon. Easterners on the other hand had a tendency to speak about the God concept in collective terms, often using “we” or discussing the God-factor in terms of relationships (to others) thus indicating an underlying collective cultural awareness. Also overall, the Westerners approached the subject of God with a rational objective frame when the Easterners clearly displayed an emotional attachment to the subject. It appeared that while the Western subjects displayed “thinking” about the concept of

God, the Eastern subjects tend to display “feelings”. One participant even shed tears during the interview as he could not contain his overwhelming emotion that welled up when he was responding during the interview process. Another participant passionately derided non-believers claiming he is “pissed-off”, particularly with the Agnostics as uncaring selfish individuals in society. To make his case sound convincing, he projects Agnostics in negative light, using a powerful analogy comparing agnostics to uncaring German neighbours (‘who continued drinking their beer’) who did not go to the aid of their persecuted Jewish neighbours during the war (see Appendix 4.6.3.1). These emotional eruptions show the deep identification of these individuals to their own beliefs. Among the Western participants one in particular displayed strong emotion and that was NF, the one participant who cynically questions the existence of God after his own disillusioned, close and familiar experience with the Anglican Church where he had been a priest for twelve years. So from the excerpts and discussion in this section it is clear that the concept of God can be contentious and sensitive subject for many individuals. However, because it often evokes such fervent and passionate responses it can be concluded that regardless of whether one was a believer or non-believer, the God factor seem to be a fairly significant and sometimes prickly issue for many participants. To establish if participants could distinguish between the concepts of spirituality and religiosity the next section highlights their perceptions and positions on these often confusing terms.

4.6.4 Distinction between spirituality and religiosity for research participants

In discussing the distinction between spirituality and religiosity the participants were asked the following questions:

Do you think spirituality and religiosity is one and the same thing?

Overwhelmingly **all** participants both Eastern and Western answered “No” to this question.

What's your understanding of the difference between these two concepts?

To this question there was a mixed response. For instance DVE, although a Malaysian (3rd generation Malaysian Indian migrant), describes his Hindu ancestral heritage as historically entrenched in India, originating in the Indus Valley civilisation between 2500 -1500BC. This participant makes reference to his inspiration in Mahatma Gandhi, a national leader who led India to independence from British colonisation guided by his strong spiritual values. This participant also explains the origin and historical reference to the term Hinduism as a misnomer and that the true practitioners of this religious denomination practice “Sanatana Dharma”, which is the path of eternal truth and duty. This participant clearly distinguishes between religion and spirituality and highlights that people confuse the two concepts to be one and the same thing. He was fairly critical about some religious practices which he said were stupid and provided his take on why religion has its negative connotations as seen in the excerpt above. However, he does not disassociate with his own religious tradition or heritage. After the interview (which began at his office and then adjourned to his family home), he took the researcher on a tour of his family's religious altar, a room dedicated for religious rites and prayers, the walls adorned with the various images of Hindu Gods and Goddess. He also took time to inform the researcher about the importance of a Guru in the Hindu tradition, showing the Guru lineage that his family have been disciples of for several generations. His extended explanation of the origin of the term Hindu was done with great pride and firm conviction, given in the manner of educating the researcher. This could be because the participant established a sense of ethnographic freedom in relating his Hindu beliefs to the researcher once he was convinced the researcher's own origin was similar to his and so he took the liberty to extend a historical and philosophical narration in a way to convince the researcher of the grandeur and majesty of their mutual belief systems. On a few occasions during this interview, the participant would test the knowledge of the researcher on

some custom or ritual common in the Hindu tradition and if he felt the researcher did not convincingly show an understanding of the concept discussed, he would then take time to elaborately explain the relevant custom. At these moments the researcher greatly benefited from the previous Heuristic stage of incubation, a period taken to explore her own spiritual beliefs and understandings as it allowed this participant to feel totally relaxed and comfortable to discuss his ideas knowing that it is directed towards an individual (the researcher) who not only had an academic interest in the topic of spirituality but also “shared” his Hindu heritage, hence discussing his own identity in an expanded way to include the researcher in a spirit of “us” for example he used the term “our Hindu” to describe his faith, heritage, beliefs, customs etc. Other Eastern participants such as JTP (see Appendix 4.6.3.1 for an extended excerpt of JTPs response) and JFFL below also clearly made the distinction between spirituality and religion and were able to clearly explain their positions on the two concepts.

“Religion, and of course spirituality is two different things to me. For example the Lord said you have to worship 5 times in a day and if you follow that, that’s religion - that’s being religious. The Lord said that you should fast a certain period of time that is religion, is not spiritual. Spirituality is any time any place it just happen naturally because you love God and you experience the love of God ...I would very much like to be spiritual rather than religious. And of course it’s going to be a conscious attempt trying to be spiritual.”
(JTP)

“When you talk about religion, it can be Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity etc..I think, spirituality is religion yet religion is not spirituality because when you see mainstream religion today there’s criticism. I don’t have religion now. In Chinese families we pray to idols, then I discovered a bit of Buddhism and now I do the VCM meditation.”
(JFFL)

The Eastern participants clearly are able to make the distinction between religiosity and spirituality, making critical assessments when religious practices borders on obtuse or irrelevant

activity as cited by DVE. However, the large majority of the Eastern participants seem to identify strongly with their own religious faith and practices often attending to their prescribed rites, rituals, practices held in their respective enshrined traditions, and also upholding ethical commandments of sacred text or those transmitted by religious authorities. There does not appear to be paradoxical conflict between what they deem to be religious against what they perceive to be spiritual. They seem to appreciate, that it is the religious traditions and institutions that uphold the higher values that is described to advance into spirituality. They naturally accept that the religious traditions shape or help in the advancement towards a more personal spiritual journey where the external voice of a religious authority is progressively replaced with an inner voice of spiritual wisdom or questioning. So the movement from religious to spiritual appears to be a natural progression where individuals beginning with authoritative external religious guidance or education, slowly evolve and mature to an internal inward and personal journey where the personalities begin to develop a direct experience or relationship with the sacred. At the spiritual stage they develop an appreciation of the divine in all life, encompassing everything in nature and existence.

So whilst a distinction is made between what is considered religious or spiritual, spirituality is seen as an advanced stage on the same continuum. Beginning with an authority based religious foundation and evolving into a wisdom based and life enhancing spiritual experience. Thus between religiosity and spirituality, the latter is seen as a higher dimension of the two concepts. Nevertheless, there is also a deep attachment of love and appreciation towards their respective cultural religious traditions. Even after individuals have outgrown their religious beliefs and adopt a more personal inner journey towards the divine through spiritual (meditative) rather than religious (prayer, worship) paths. The evolution is seen to be natural and complimentary similar to how students advance from primary to tertiary, people are seen to need religious guidance

when they are younger or during youth and as they mature into adulthood the religious indoctrination of their childhood naturally and progressively ought to turn individuals to question the higher meaning of their lives and existence, thus becoming spiritually inclined as they mature. In the process some may lose or drop the religious tendencies and focus on spiritual philosophies and practices. Others develop a spiritual focus while continuing to maintain a strong religious tradition in their lives. This was clearly evident amongst the Eastern participants when asked this following question:

Do you consider yourself to be spiritual or religious?

Both Muslim participants (ZMS and DTHTMI) from the Eastern sample answered they were both spiritual and religious at the same time, refusing to separate the two concepts. KM, JTP and DVE saw themselves as more spiritual but actively engaged and participated in their respective religious rites and ceremonies. JFFL no longer engages in idol worship but remains respectful of religious traditions but practices meditation as a way to engage his inner spiritual self. While some people could become attached to religious practices and do not mature into spiritual questioning and introspection, remaining and sometimes developing dogmatic views of their religious indoctrinations, this was not discovered amongst the participants in this research.

4.6.5 Triggers leading to spiritual search or awareness

While most spiritual text suggests that an inner spiritual life exist for all humans, the awareness or search for the so-called inner or higher spirit is not always a consciously deliberate or intentional act for many individuals. In this research, it appears that the spiritual awareness or search for a spiritual understanding or knowledge seems to be either a natural progression or triggered by significant events or incidences in the lives of the participants (both Eastern and Western) as the following sections describe.

4.6.5.1 Traumatic or significant event

To some participants the quest for spirituality is triggered by some traumatic event. These include specific events sometimes tragic or sorrowful personal experiences prompting search for higher meaning to cope with emotional upheaval. For example a few Western participants share some of the significant events that intensified their spiritual seeking in their lives as seen in their excerpts below:

“When I was 30+ I experienced a personal crisis. I became a vegetarian and started Yoga and meditation. Since that incident I meditated every day for 2 years and had certain profound experiences, though I meditate more sporadically now, but I have a strong sense of inner calm and I’m in the flow.” (AB)

“When I turned 40 I had a hiatus with my health. I had hernia – it was a trigger...Getting sick on a regular basis, shortness of breath etc...From 40 onwards it was a gradual reawakening to my early connection with the divine. I used to experience the divine in nature but by my 30’s the ego took over and I was focussed on work. But after my reawakening in my 40s I’ve had several mystical experiences. Some too personal like past-life stuff.” (IK)

“In my mid- thirties, when my daughters were born (with disabilities). Also when my parents died. It was a big influence, more than I would have thought. Conversations with my mother before she died, I was very close to my mother; we used to talk a lot. She was a very spiritual sort of person.” (JE[F])

“I experienced a deepening of my faith when my grandmother died. It made me confront who I am within.” (DMH)

“I was travelling in Austria, in a place full of churches and we were staying at a youth hostel which was actually run by a religious order. I got a vivid feeling. I felt blessed.” (JE [M])

All the excerpts above indicate triggers that remind individuals of their spiritual self. For example JE (M) who was a church goer as a kid and then trailed away going only ‘off and on’ experienced this profound incident in his 20’s while travelling near religious sites in Austria. He says he felt a blessing and he confides that when he reads ‘the word of God – it is coming through me’ and ‘I feel emotional when I’m reading’. These statements above show that some significant event in the personal lives of the Western participants plays an important role in triggering a search for spiritual meaning.

4.6.5.2 Influence of significant other

For some participants significant relationships in their life inspired the search for deeper meaning. For example;

“My earliest memories are from childhood. My father used to sing devotional songs at home. His point is I can only sing for God. So he will not sing commercially even though he was talented. So unconsciously, I grew up with it. Nowadays, I get re-awakened to spirituality all around me, sometimes all it takes is a child. It’s a way of life for me, it begins with what you do every day, doing my morning ‘puja’ (religious devotional practice involving rites and rituals), then my meditative silence - all of it. Also when I go to work...to the extent I can practice, I do. As you do it more, you get better at it.” (DVE)

This Eastern participant despite upholding strong religious sentiments (inspired by his parents when young), was also very clearly into meditative spiritual practices and advocated it through his talks at public seminars. He has also written a book which he distributes at various forums. In his book entitled ‘In the Sphere of Silence’ he writes about the value of silent introspection to gain clarity and mastery over ones highest potentiality? The book is dedicated in loving gratitude to his parents whom he names as ‘My first Gurus’. The next examples from Western participants show that some are inspired by significant biblical, spiritual and historical figures;

“I am inspired by the life of Jesus a lot. But not as a God, but Jesus as a man. I find him inspiring although he existed two thousand years outside of my time, but certainly he is an inspiration. I think also the story of Mandela and the story of Gandhi is an inspiration.”
(NF)

“I was most significantly inspired by Andrew Cohen. His teachings and being with like-minded people with regular spiritual practice such as meditation and chanting taught by WIE (What is Enlightenment) has inspired me to deeply care for the evolution of Consciousness Culture, creating a deep sense responsibility to others, as a duty towards the self and others.” (IK)

For IK above, his inspiration came from his Guru, a new-age spiritual Guru based in the US who has developed a unique path of spiritual transformation called “Evolutionary Enlightenment”. It is obvious that for some participants, their spiritual seeking and evolution was influenced by significant others.

4.6.5.3 Natural progression

To some participants becoming spiritual was a natural progression and generally a slow evolutionary process which often began at childhood or youth, particularly with the Eastern participants. Many had been exposed to a religious or spiritual practice from youth which fuelled their own mature spiritual growth as some of the following excerpts show;

“To me, being spiritual is a natural thing in my family. My six sisters were a strong influence as we engaged in worship of God in our family and of course later I developed my own circle of friends that I mixed with in University days who further influenced me. It was a slow evolutionary process.” (JTP)

“It began with my religious education at age 5 or 6. From there you go to secondary school and you start to practice what was taught at the primary level and the practical part of applying the religious education happens when you start working and have your own family and so what you learnt at age 5 or 6 you start to know and experience through life.” (ZMS)

“The basic upbringing I’ve had, from the time I was six years old attending Quran classes is the foundation of my belief.” (DTHTMI)

DTHTMI points out that his belief has evolved over time, becoming exposed to religious education at an impressionable age and then questioning the teachings when he experienced conflicting life circumstances that challenged his religious values. He confides, over time he moved from setting life goals to then setting higher goals moving from material and slowly leaning towards altruistic goals to serve and contribute in society.

Overall the results indicate that for all participants spiritual awareness is not an instinctive phenomenon that is readily perceived. For some it was through some form of structured teaching or learning through religious institutions or family practices and for others where such structure was lacking, there were traumatic events or significant others who triggered the insight for something beyond the physical, sometimes spontaneously becoming aware of an inner dimension that gives deep personal meanings to their lives.

4.7 ANALYSIS OF WESTERN-EASTERN PERSPECTIVES ON SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

Typically, the Eastern participants took longer to provide answers that often broke into story-telling and sharing of their life experiences, often extending the time of interview, the longest was about four hours. It seemed as if the Eastern participants were less conscious of the time factor during the interview. Generally, they also appeared to be more curious about the researcher’s background, often asking preliminary questions prior to the commencement of the interview to get to know the researcher more closely. Although some interviews were organised to be held in the office of the Eastern participants, they often created an informal atmosphere, offering drinks and biscuits in their space and a few adjourned the interview to a cafe or restaurant, and others to their homes where they continued to discuss the subject even after the formal interview was concluded.

The Western participants on the other hand provided more deliberate and succinct answers and often kept strictly to the interview time, usually within or slightly above an hour. The responses from the Eastern participants appeared more emotional with lots of personal feelings and thoughts expressed without much or any prodding by the researcher. While the Western participants seem to think deeply about a question and appeared concerned about providing accurate answers, some even venturing to reframe the questions asked, before responding, hence the formality of an interview was well-maintained with a level of detachment and their responses were less-emotionally laden. However, the Western participants showed more presence during the interview and were less distracted by other happenings around the office with interruptions kept to a minimum, while in the Eastern scenario; there were frequent interruptions during the process of the interview.

The findings in Phase 1 clearly indicate that people both East and West at their level of existence, beginning from birth via a uniquely structured pattern and process of parenting, education, socialisation and deep enculturation all of which are an imposition of institutions, structures and values of society or culture onto individual personalities. This process of enculturation is therefore deeply ingrained to the DNA of personalities and reflected in their perceptions and worldviews presenting very different points of view particularly in the personal and sensitive subject of spirituality and religiosity. The findings addressing the first RQ in this research can be fairly well chartered and compared to Ken Wilber's (2006) 4 quadrant Model of Integral Spirituality.

In his model, Wilber presents that there are levels in an interior consciousness of individuals and correspondingly exterior levels of physical complexity. He further explains that the interior consciousness can be seen as states and stages of consciousness. States of consciousness refers to profound altered internal peak experiences which come and go, they are

temporary experiences, which sometimes include mystical, unexplainable spiritual experiences, such as communion with a higher spirit, or seeing a divine light within or having a sense of oneness with nature or all other beings. All of which are temporary, passing experiences. On the other hand, stages of consciousness according to Wilber are permanent states, which are milestones of growth or developments in a human. When analysing spiritual development or growth, once an individual stably reaches a stage, he or she can access the capacities of that stage such as greater consciousness, more embracing of love, higher ethical callings, greater intelligence and awareness. In his integral model he proposes between eight to ten stages or levels of consciousness. In business management language, it is often presented as the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional stages of moral development (Kohlberg, 1971; Graham, 1995, 2009). In other words moral development tends to move from “I” or “self-centred” (egocentric) to “us” or “we” centred (ethnocentric) to “all of us” (world-centric).

Wilber (2006) compares this to the three stages of body, mind and spirit, where typically at Stage 1 an individual is identified with the gross physical separate body that drives the “I” or “me” stage. Then in the mind stage, the identity expands to include shared relationships such as those in family and community where there are shared values, mutual interest and common ideals expanding from “me” to “us” and finally from that stage to include “all of us” the world centric stage where despite recognising cultural differences in human society there is also recognition of a spiritual connection or commonality between all beings. Wilber’s integral model (Figure 4.2) is useful in explaining some findings in this research.

Particularly in the Eastern sample the ethnocentric focus is particularly pronounced, where cultural and religious traditions seem to greatly influence the perception of participants on their spiritual growth and development, often constructing their responses in cultural or ethnocentric frameworks. This is represented in the lower left quadrant in Wilber’s model.

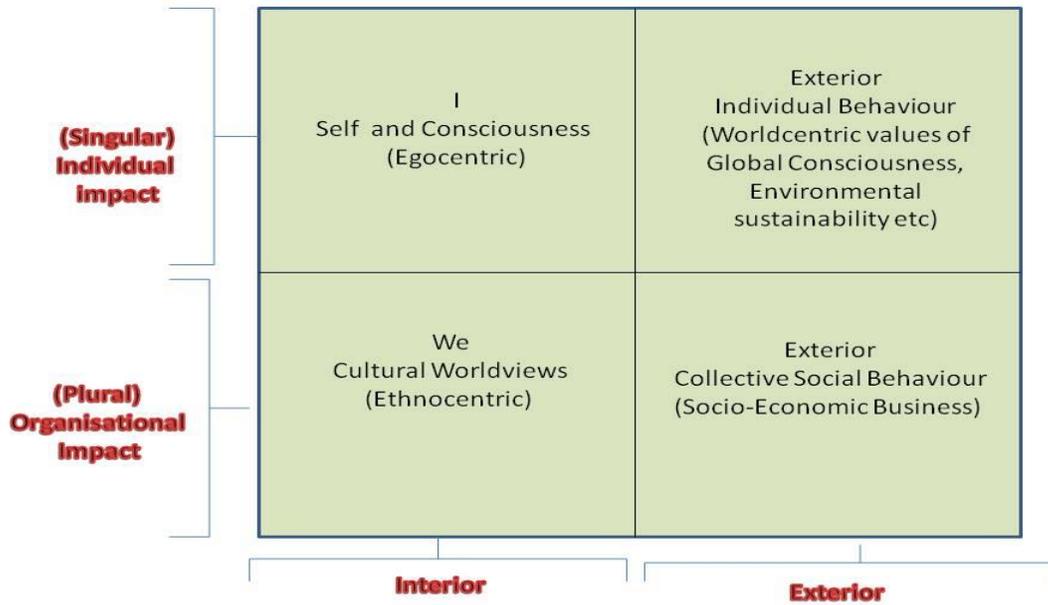


Figure 4.2 Ken Wilber's 4 Quadrant Integral Spirituality
 (Adapted from Wilber, 2006, p.21)

Conversely, the responses from Western participants lean towards egocentric frameworks pointing to a more individualistic cultural legacy which influences the participants to generally respond to questions in a 1st person pronoun, represented in the upper left quadrant of Wilber's model. It was observed that the Western respondents were not entirely comfortable in expressing their own spiritual beliefs or have others openly express their spiritual or religious belief in the workplace. Thus there appears to be an unspoken conformity to rational principles at the workplace, even though in their personal or private world these individuals may be deeply engaged or interested in spiritual or religious belief or practice. The corporate business environment does not appear to support the expression of any spiritual or religious imperatives unless it occurs outside of the business or work domain. Thus for people with spiritual or religious inclinations, there is a subtle pressure to compartmentalise their professional and personal lives, conforming to dominant rational or secular expectations at the workplace where capitalist objectives prevail over and above any personal spiritual pursuits or engagement in

religious activity. So mostly such indulgence occurs mainly away from the office fronts and only ever discussed in undertones in the office space.

The Eastern sample on the other hand experience a greater freedom of expression as well as integration of personal spiritual or religious practice at the workplace. Despite cultural differences in diverse multi-racial Malaysia there was an agreeable attitude towards practicing spiritual or religious events at the work place, often marking a time for celebration between various ethnic groups in the office. Furthermore the number of religious based public holidays is about 12 days in a calendar year in Malaysia as opposed to only 3 days in Australia. Many participants were openly and willingly able to integrate their religious beliefs with their spiritual values, rarely seeing a conflict between the two concepts suggesting the early religious indoctrination that occurs in Eastern cultures tend to evolve into a spiritual value system over a period of growth and maturity in the individuals. The findings indicate that unlike Western participants who discuss the concept of spirituality and religiosity in separate terms often preferring to be spiritual rather than religious, the Eastern participants held a sense of pride over religious traditions which they believed moulded them when young and guided the transition towards a higher spiritual dimensions in their maturity.

The level of religious tolerance was fairly high in the Eastern participants, partaking in the celebrations of other religious cultures as mostly these occasions were nationally recognised as public holidays for all communities, so there is a general awareness about the different religious celebration and to some extent appreciation of the various religious practices in Malaysia between the various inter-racial communities. Such level of religious tolerance appeared limited in the Western context where personal religious faith and practices are celebrated within the respective communities and apart from the Christian religious holidays of Good Friday, Easter and Christmas, all other religious or communal celebrations are not recognised as public holidays

and so is contained and isolated within the socio-cultural groups celebrating uniquely different religious-cultural festivities.

It can be concluded that the evolutionary stages in interior lives of all individuals occur in the exterior cast of dominant geographical and cultural moorings of each personality. This vast range of cultural embedded-ness and almost unconscious systemic conditioning of human personalities forming structures and patterns that underlie their internal psyche determine their level or stages of development morally, ethically, personally, professionally, socially, economically and in all other relevant spheres of an individual's life. This was true also for the religious and/or spiritual belief of each individual personality. The findings on spiritual awareness between the Eastern and Western participants suggest there are certain differences between the two cohorts which when carefully analysed appear superficially embedded in cultural variance of the two cohorts. However, when deeply probed both cohorts reveal a fundamentally similar understanding on the concepts of spirituality and religiosity. It is assuring to note that there was a level of universal understanding of the concept of spirituality despite the overt differences in language, practice and processes used amongst the two groups of participants to describe this tacit understanding.

4.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter has described the profile of the participants in Phase I and presented the findings on the first research question which sought to establish the level of spiritual awareness among business leaders who participated in this cross-cultural research comparing East and West. The findings indicate some superficial differences in the external expression and observances of spiritual values, however on the issue of tacit awareness of the spiritual concept; both the Eastern and Western cohorts displayed a high level of understanding through their own varying personal belief systems, some of which remain culturally embedded within religious structures of heritage.

This was more evident in the Eastern participants, whilst amongst the Western participants religious ideologies seem to have less of a stronghold, preferring instead to directly focus on spiritual essence. Although the Easterners showed a strong affinity to religious beliefs, they were well aware of the distinction between spirituality and religiosity, however choosing to embrace the co-existence of both without seeing much conflict between the two-concepts.

On the other hand, the Westerners displayed high levels of caution towards religious connotations, and held a politically correct stance on the subject, seeing the potential for conflict and radicalism in practicing religious values overtly. Reasons for this differentiation between the two cohorts will be further explored and analysed within the discussions in the following chapters. This chapter also discussed Wilber's (2006) Integral Spiritual Four Quadrant Model which further informs this study on the innermost dimension of individuals its relationships with external dimensions. The following chapter presents the findings on personal values that result from being spiritually aware which potentially has an organisational impact in the workplace of these business leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHASE I – INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY IN ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Fulfilling the four needs [spiritual, mental, physical, social in an integrated way is like combining elements in chemistry. When we reach a "critical mass" of integration, we experience spontaneous combustion--an explosion of inner synergy that ignites the fire within and gives vision, passion, and a spirit of adventure to life.

Stephen Covey

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter addressed the first research question to establish that participants in this research had a high level of spiritual awareness and their personal values were influenced by their spiritual beliefs. It focussed primarily in understanding the internal worldview of the 12 business leaders who participated in Phase I of this research. The findings in Chapter 4 reveal that spiritual awareness can arise in various (temporary) states leading to (permanent) expanded stages, within the interior consciousness of participants. This can occur either through triggers such as traumatic life events, relationships with significant others or through a more evolutionary process of natural progression. Spiritual awareness is the intuitive-creative capacity of individuals which correlates to the states and stages of expanded consciousness within the minds of each individual (Wilber, 2006).

It's apparent from the analysis in the previous chapter that a distinct difference is present between the participants of Eastern and Western origin, on how spiritual awareness is acquired. It's obvious that an individual's internal consciousness does not exist in a vacuum but instead it is inextricably linked to the external socialisation and structural patterns of a given family, community, society, nation etc. Thus the individual would have been uniquely and systematically exposed to a dynamic set of cultural influences since early childhood. This explains why the Eastern participants could articulate the distinction between spirituality and religiosity, yet

expressed great appreciation and deep connection between the two concepts. The secularisation that occurred in the Western society with the separation of the Church from the state did not occur to any significant extent in the East. Hence the polarisation of the concepts of spirituality and religiosity appears to be a Western phenomenon. Against this backdrop, this study continues to explore if the inner spiritual dimension of business leaders of the Eastern and Western world impact upon their colleagues and co-workers in their respective businesses. More specifically, this chapter considers the perception of the 12 business leaders on how their inner spiritual values, influence their personal values and in turn how does this impact the exterior world of work, in terms of workplace values, workplace relations, environment and policies. This Chapter also includes the viewpoints of four independent business consultants who share their professional thoughts on the future of business in terms of integrating spirituality to organisational leadership. Their perspective augments the results in providing a multi-dimensional perspective on this subject.

5.2 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter presents data analysis of organisational themes that emerged from Phase I. These organisational themes are categorically analysed to answer research questions 2, 3 and 4 as depicted in the Figure below. This includes the self-perceptions of the 12 business leaders augmented by the viewpoints of 4 business consultants representing East and West. The perspective of the business consultants was obtained using narrative interviews. The profile of the four business management consultants is presented before some of their narratives are analysed. The analysis provides a viewpoint on how spirituality may be relevant or integrated within organisational leadership seen through the lenses of the involved research participants and also through the lenses of the four independent consultants.



Figure 5.1 Research Questions 2, 3 and 4 and Organisational Themes

5.3 EMERGENT ORGANISATIONAL THEMES

Table 5.1 below present the key organisational themes that emerged from Phase I data. It presents the categories and sub-categories of themes that were detected from extensive and repeated reading of the Phase I transcripts and listening of Phase I recordings during fieldwork. Most participants repeated the same values cited for Q.5 in the section on personal values when answering the following question Q.1 under the workplace values section.

Q.1: What are the values you think are most in the workplace?

The two categories of organisational themes discussed in this section are:

1. Workplace values
2. Workplace spirituality

5.4 THE LINK BETWEEN SPIRITUAL AWARENESS, PERSONAL VALUES AND WORKPLACE VALUES

The previous chapter listed the values pertaining to spiritual awareness and personal values held by participants in Table 4.3. The following section highlights the self-perception of business leaders on values they consider important in the workplace. Many of the Eastern participants linked workplace values to spiritual values. It can be observed from the excerpts that follow, that whilst the participants are speaking about important workplace values, they answer the question in reference to spiritual values, even though the sequence of questions on the interview schedule had not yet specifically broached on the topic of workplace spirituality. Whether they were influenced by the preamble to the interview which briefly highlights the research objectives to skew all their answers with a spiritual context is a plausible explanation. The range of organisational/workplace values which appeared in the interview transcripts are listed in the sub-categories column (3rd column) under the Workplace values category in Table 5.1 below.

The Eastern participants seem to make the link to spirituality to workplace values even before they were asked to think in terms of spiritual values at the workplace. The following are some excerpts that illustrate this point. For example;

“I try not to preach, but sometimes I do! I would explain to staff some religious practices which I consider important. For example when I caught a staff claiming excessive overtime, I advise that you can lie to your boss but you can't lie to God. Usually I talk to those who are receptive one to one, but overall I do advice staff about the importance of honesty in their work and encourage teamwork between them. Some staff will come to me for advice, others would avoid me! Work is religious as religion is a way of life, including work.” (ZMS)

Categories of Themes	Categories	Sub-categories
1. Workplace values	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • Team-player • Service • Humility • Honesty • Responsibility • Punctuality • Accountability • Motivation • Self-respect • Competency • Communication • Commitment • Compassion • Loyalty • Self-direction • Credibility and Reliability
2. Workplace spirituality	Workplace Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness • Trust • Empathy • Loyalty • Joy and Fun • Appreciation • Caring • Hope • Sincerity
	Workplace culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family at Work • Creativity • Initiative • Transparency • Celebration of festivals • Humanistic
	Workplace policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict or Discrimination • Legal Implications • Moral Obligations • Corporate Social responsibility

Table 5.1 Emergent Organisational Themes from Phase 1

The other Eastern participants seem to consistently make the link between spirituality and workplace values as follows;

“We practice recital of prayers before meetings and we encourage our staff to fulfil their prayer obligations during office hours by providing a “surau” (Muslim prayer room) so that they can pray. ...Over the past 16 years I can see people are more motivated, more

committed and also we are multi-religious I can see there is no segregation between them...I also used to conduct daily morning prayers in the office with recital from the Quran for 15 minutes and I used to have foreign white expatriates who would join in without any problems.” (DTHTMI see Appendix 5.4 for full excerpt)

“Values such as integrity, honesty, compassion, patience – all these good values - where do you learn this? It’s definitely thru spirituality. Even if you look at the Management Gurus they too cite these same values. It’s the same things that the Bhagavad Gita, or Quran or Bible speak about.” (KM)

“...being in a senior position is really important to be humble and obey authorities above. This is what we are taught in our spiritual traditions...We can’t disintegrate work from our spiritual values. I don’t think we have a culture of saying you can’t bring your spiritual values into work. I’m sure the bosses will be truly happy if everybody practiced their spiritual values – usually they are good values and so will be good for the workplace too.” (JTP see Appendix 3.4 for full excerpt)

“Love is the most important and the most powerful tool – all management tools and techniques promoted by the different Management Gurus, they contribute a bit, but they are not penetrative enough to reach the deep-seated sublime centre of our mind where if that flowers, the force within deeply embedded in our mind, in ourselves, in every being - when you allow that to flourish only then real change will occur. In my own workplace there is certainly room for more improvements, but I’m proud to say, compared to many companies I’ve seen in Malaysia, these values are more prominent in my company.” (JFFL see Appendix 5.4 for full excerpt)

“Service is the most important value at work. I have a little rule book. When you serve the Lord in you, you will find Him. If you serve Him in others, He will find you. So service is the cardinal rule. The motto in my company is to raise yourself in order to serve mankind.” (DVE see Appendix 5.4 for full excerpt)

The excerpts above from the Eastern participants clearly draw a link between workplace values and spiritual values. However, the same was not the case with participants from the West when probed on workplace values. The following are some excerpts from the Western sample;

“There is a natural tendency for me to trust people that I’m interacting with personally... I am reasonably competitive, as in excited and energised...So yes it’s important to have trust within the team. But in the bank, a lot of people don’t trust senior managers. There’s a lot of suspicion over decisions by senior managers and sometimes these suspicions are well-founded.” (JE [M]see full excerpt in Appendix 5.4)

“Truth is the most important value here. Truth and listening. When people speak the truth in an organisation, when we allow that freedom, to be truthful and we listen to these truths – truth heard will make a better organisation. Truth not heard or suppressed creates a bad or frightening organisation. We can change for the better if we hear truth.” (NF)

“Reliability is high on the list of important values at work and that’s in my life in general along with honesty.” (JE [F])

“At work, integrity is an important value. Willingness to initiate and be independent and also take responsibility. Also need to be team players and have the capability to be a leader. These are the values we seek when we recruit.”(IK)

“I expect my staff to display growth, passion, integrity, agility and commitment.” (AB)

“I expect team spirit, team camaraderie, good work ethic and a bit of ambition and of course trust.” (DMH)

With all the participants in the West, when asked what they thought were the most important values at work, they all answered without a single mention of the word spirituality or making any reference to the God factor, a clear contrast to all the responses received to same question from their Eastern counterparts. This finding extends logically from the findings in

Chapter 4 which highlights how spiritual values are deeply entwined with all aspects of life including work life in the Eastern world, whereas in the West these values are simply seen as human or ethical values which are rationalised to be relevant and important to work life without associating it to any form of transcendental concepts.

5.4.1. Workplace relations and culture

The previous section depicting workplace values provides some evidence of the kind of organisation culture that exist in the workplace particularly from the excerpts taken from the Eastern participants. Most Eastern participants admit that their own spiritual values influence the kind of relationships they have with their staff and other stakeholders related to work. A few more excerpts presented below further captures the circumstances through which workplace relations and cultures are formed.

“My staff also are well aware of my high ethical standards and know that I have personally rejected projects that involved bribery as sometimes I have to deal with government contracts where corruption exist...So I set a good example for my staff and they know I won’t compromise my conscience to make a quick buck...This further builds trust in the office environment and staff begin to respect you for your values and I’m aware that I’m a role-model to them...The religious rites that I perform at work, my staff are keen to participate in, for example, they would bring flowers for the altar at work.”
(KM, for full excerpt see Appendix 5.4.1)

“Spirituality affects everything. You begin to see everything is interrelated...Over time, others in the office will notice these qualities and I find it attracts better relationships with one another. People become peaceful around you and have greater confidence and are generally comfortable with you. There is no fear that you’ll back-stab them when their backs are turned. When you are spiritual, you work in a way that brings goodness to your company and so naturally things improve with co-workers and in this company we have grown from strength to strength, without the typical, strategic plans where everything is quantitatively measured. We focus on building good relationships.” (JFFL, see Appendix 5.4.1 for full excerpt)

The majority of the participants present a positive image of the kinds of relationships and culture within their respective organisations. The Eastern participants tend to link workplace relations and culture to spiritual values but the Western participants refrain from doing so as illustrated in the following two excerpts.

“We have a nice environment. Everybody pretty much likes each other. It’s a caring environment so we get a lot of joy and fun out of being at work – like everyone’s birthdays are celebrated with a birthday cake and I give them a birthday present and for Christmas we have functions that include their family as well.” (JE[F])

“People love to come to work. There is a strong connection between members. I see the emergence of creativity more and more. People show more initiative and independence on their own.” (IK)

5.4.2. Workplace policies

This section analyses if spiritual values held by a leader of an organisation translates into actual workplace policy or norm. From the Eastern sample one participant (DVE) had a vegetarianism policy in his company. To the point if an Executive in the company was a non-vegetarian, his meal allowance, especially during travel, is not reimbursed if he had eaten a non-vegetarian meal. Same also applies to alcohol consumption. He says in Malaysia this is common practice, for example and in any official government banquet pork or alcohol would not be served to respect the Muslims so he says there’s nothing unusual about his company’s vegetarian policy. He says most staff and client accept the policy although they might joke about it every now and then.. Another participant DTHTMI, recites from a Quran before commencing any meetings in the office. If there were non-Muslims present in the meeting he will take time to interpret the meaning of the verse he reads to highlight to them the significance of the verse. He says usually, the content are universal values that cuts across all religious traditions and so he has never had anyone ever being offended by this norm he practices at work. Muslim staff are encouraged to do

their prayers and this was also highlighted by ZMS and KM as a prevalent culture in their respective organisations.

Among the Westerners, AB had quarterly workshops for personal development of his staff in which they discuss inner soul and seek for ideas to spread love in the office. He says these efforts fosters a culture of sharing and caring and build trust in his company which are crucial for all to work well together. So as a leader, he sees himself as driving the culture of his company thru creative policies such as this. IK suggest that the 5 guiding principles held as corporate policy in his mining firm can be linked to spiritual values. The five values are 1) Performance; 2) Simplicity; 3) Leadership; 4) Commercial Focus and 5) Integrity. He says these values when dissected are congruent to spiritual values as performance is about striving to excel, simplicity is about keeping it simple and to be easily understood, leadership is about showing the way and inspiring others, commercial focus is about creating long term shareholder value and integrity is about acting with openness, honesty, authenticity and respect to all stakeholders including the global community. IK explains that ultimately, the company expresses its dignity through the dignity of its office bearers. Other participants highlight company policies under the CSR or ethics banner such as:

“As a bank, we have a strong corporate culture. Lots of efforts occur under the Corporate Social Responsibility policies, you know, we donate to various causes, like to Bushfire victims, sponsorships to disadvantaged kids – so there are community based responsibility, giving back to society sort of thing. Still more we can do. With ethics we have ingrained policies in black and white on how we should treat people, also reflected in our HR and recruitment policies.” (DMH)

“Yeah we have policies to help communities, but those policies also made commercial sense too, because it was good publicity for the bank and it helps build further business and many companies do that with the intent of getting something back. I don’t think we

are doing enough in terms of CSR – we sometimes just comply with policies and law but we don't challenge the laws, to go further.” (JE[M])

These two participants above are from the banking industry. They hint at how CSR policies in the banks are not going the distance in addressing social or community needs. They highlight that these policies often have a strong business sense by way of some commercial return to the business. As seen in the last two excerpts these participants also do not make the link between CSR policies to spiritual values. Overall, the expressions of these participants indicate that in some cases, where possible, the spiritual values held by participants are translated into explicit workplace policy however this is not as evident in all cases especially when policy-making at the broad company level is beyond the authority of some participants who although considered senior management, were not policy-makers in their respective firms.

5.4.3. Spirituality and the bottom-line

The final question on the Workplace spirituality section on the Interview protocol was;

Q.17: Does spirituality in the workplace contribute to the improvement in the organisation's bottom line (profits)?

This question was included to consider if within the perception of these business leaders, they saw a link between spirituality and the profitability of their business. Some researchers in the field as discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two are trying to prove that there was a positive correlation between the practice of spirituality and profitability in business. This is naturally a difficult proposition as proving the link between an intangible source (spirituality) to a tangible outcome (profits) is problematic in terms of measurement – although some researchers have even attempted to measure spirituality and religion (Slater, Hall & Edwards, 2001; Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988; Beazley, 1997). From the author's own spiritual understanding, the phenomenon of spirituality is beyond measure and places this preoccupation

at measurement as the influence of positivistic bias in management studies. This issue will be addressed in Chapter 7 with some valid reasons for a newer perspective to understand the existential and utilitarian perspectives of spirituality. At this point in presenting the findings, suffice to note that the purpose of this research was mainly to see if the inner world spiritual perception of the business leaders is positively co-related to the idea of success or profitability in their respective external work. The following presents responses from the business leaders in the Malaysian sample.

“It should yes, definitely it would translate to profit, to productivity. Because usually spirituality would tax you to be honest in what you do, at the same time you practice integrity yeah and I always believe that if you have this value you will be always be rewarded - in a good way.”(JTP)

“Spirituality helps you accept things in your stride and move on. Our company has had astronomical growth in the last 8 years. I may not link it to spirituality, but I definitely would not de-link it. I would say it’s an important component. It’s a lot to do with acceptance rather than expectation like all important things in life. When you accept you have better experience of everything, whether its love, marriage, work or profits.” (DVE – See Appendix 5.4.3 for full excerpt)

“From my experience yes, you can see the link in productivity, the honesty of my staff, it helps in my decision-making for important projects and sometimes when I have to make tough decisions, so definitely my faith helps me to be humane and just and rational at the same time.” (DTHTMI)

“Bottom-line is not just about profits. It must be holistic. It must bring joy - joy derived at work. It is therefore contributing to my bottom-line.” (KM)

“Definitely, it increases productivity and success in doing a job well, which will then definitely link back to profitability. So yes, I think spirituality directly impacts the bottom line.” (ZMS)

“If you allow God, according to your capacity He will reward. It will be given unto you. Seek first the Kingdom of God within you and all else will be given unto you. Let go and trust Him and so yes, there is a link between spirituality and the bottom line. When there is spiritual effort in all that you do, then the rewards will follow.” (JFFL)

The general response to this question from the Eastern participants’ show that they are mostly inclined to link their bottom line concerns to spirituality, although none could provide any tangible proof of it. DVE for instance was clear to say that although he can’t directly link the two ideas, he definitely would not “*de-link*” it, explaining also that in business there are periods of success and failure. According to him spirituality allows individuals to accept whatever outcomes in ones stride, pick up and move on. Another, participant KM highlight, bottom line is not simply about profits, but also about joy. She highlights that when one experiences joy at work, which in itself is an important bottom line success. Most participants saw a direct link between spirituality and productivity which they then positively co-related to profitability. This implies for most of them, spirituality and profitability are indirectly linked. The following are responses from Western participants to the same question:

“It’d be nice to prove wouldn’t it? [SHORT PAUSE] I’m inclined to say yes. I don’t know how I can justify that though. And I say yes because people who are happy are genuinely spiritually happy with themselves and happy with the world are more productive. And people who are happy and productive also therefore produce profits. And I think that if, with a better sense of spirituality we also have better corporate social responsibility and that has a lot more flow and fix than what we anticipate, and therefore yeah, I think it does.” (DMH)

“Wow. [PAUSE]On my level I would say yes. [PAUSE]. Whether [PAUSE]. Certain things do lead to improvements in the bottom line. Whether those are driven one way or another by this spirit or spirituality, it’s hard to know. But, I can say in absolute alignment between spiritual, good spiritual values lead to good sustainable bottom line outcomes. I think the word sustainable needs to be in there.” (JE [M])

“I believe those people that work hard, love what they do and in fact we’ve then got an organization that’s driven by purpose to make a difference in the world. Those two things I feel, love and I go to work every day to try to do something good for the world means that we probably have productivity and profits that are unlike most businesses in Australia at the moment.” (NF)

“I would believe so because I think if people are feeling more fulfilled, happy, content, then they’re going to work better. Hence, that’s why we look at what you like doing and what you are good at. So I think it must help to have everybody working in a nice smooth way so therefore that’s, that’s got to improve your profits.” (JE[F])

“Yes, spirituality improves flow in the office. If you flow more appropriately together, you achieve more together and thus if you have genuine leader at the top it’s likely that others would follow. A fish rots from the head down, so if the leader in a business is not genuine, it will show in the bottom line.” (AB)

“Yes, there’s a direct correlation between spirituality and the bottom line in my opinion. Spirituality helps people work out their bigger purpose and with that comes great energy and tremendous power to do the necessary at work and in life.” (IK)

Similar to their Eastern counterparts, the business leaders from the West too perceived a link between spirituality and the bottom-line. Most of their responses indicate that spirituality would improve a sense of contentment and provide positive energy in the workplace which translates into productivity which would impact the bottom-line. One participant points out the word “sustainable” as important in the equation of bottom-line. This is an important observation as spirituality is not a short-term endeavour and so unless it is practiced for the long-term the impact in the external world of outcome would be equally insignificant. So this links back to the concept of arriving at a certain “stage” in one’s spiritual growth and development, whereby once an individual’s internal consciousness has expanded to a certain stage and is sustained, then it is

likely that the individual develops the corresponding long-term trust, mutual respect and other good values in the interactions with the external world. AB highlights in his response, a “genuine leader” is important to make this happen. He uses the word “flow” to suggest that once people in the organisation integrate and work well together in a climate of trust, “flow” happens with members of the organisation achieving goals effortlessly and therefore bottom-line concerns improves as a consequence.

The organisational themes derived from Phase 1 data and the various interview excerpts presented suggest the link between workplace values and spiritual awareness is more pronounced and more openly acknowledged in the Eastern cohort, whereas Western participants seem to avoid explicit link between these concepts preferring to imply “human values” rather than “spiritual values” when discussing workplace culture and norms. This can be clearly observed in their avoidance in using spiritual or religious references in their responses to workplace values.

5.5 RELEVANCE OF SPIRITUALITY TO BUSINESS FIRMS – CONSULTANTS’ VIEWPOINT

Business management consulting is common practice in the corporate world of business especially during periods of strong economic growth. Business management consultants are hired by firms to help in improving organisational performance, through a variety of training, coaching and consultancy programs aimed at problem solving and planning for effective and efficient performance. Apart from being external and therefore viewed to be politically neutral within the organisational context, business management consultants provide the hiring firm with a suite of pre-packaged programs and strategies that can be readily implemented. Their exposure to and relationship with a wide variety of client organisations also keeps them alert to industry best practices which helps clients keep pace with the leaders within respective business industries. Organisations experiencing growth or transitions often hire change management consultants to assist with internal and external shifts in organisational conditions. Thus the partnership with

business management consultants is greatly valued for their proprietary solutions and skills to guide business firms towards successful organisational outcomes.

It was this rationale that led to the inclusion of a small sample of business management consultants to provide a neutral and objective perspective on the relevance of spirituality in the corporate world of business. Their views gathered through a more open-ended narrative interview allowed the researcher to augment the primary findings through the added lenses of some individuals who work as business management consultants. It is emphasised that the four business consultants at the time of their participation in this research, were not directly related to or linked to the principal participants in Phase 1 and Phase 2. Thus their participation was purely to obtain an independent but well-founded account on the spirituality phenomenon occurring in the corporate world of business. Similar to the sampling method used to locate the principal participants, a purposive sampling method was used to locate business consultants who were perceptive and fairly appreciative of spirituality as a relevant experience in the world of work. So the same sampling strategy was employed in selecting the four business consultants for this research.

5.5.1 General profile of business consulting participants

Four business consultants were selected to participate in this research. Two consultants were chosen from Malaysia and another two from Australia. Their brief profiles were presented in the previous chapter. The primary criterion used in their selection was that they were explicitly or implicitly open to consider the subject of spirituality in their Consulting work.

Table 5.2 presents the brief profile of the four consultants who participated in this research. It was interesting to note that among the four consultants interviewed, all four had a noteworthy narrative about their own spiritual experiences that led them to be open on the subject of spirituality. It is relevant to note that each one of them had an authentic spiritual experience or

were on a spiritual journey of their own with some prior inner work or personal spiritual experience. This is important because, unlike other rational consulting fields based on knowledge acquisition and deployment, spirituality can only be justifiably imparted by those who have a keen spiritual awareness or intense experiential perception of the creative-intuitive tacit dimension.

Origin	Interviewee	Organisation Type	Age Range	Gender	Marital Status	Religious or Spiritual Belief
Malaysian	KNA Group Chairman and Managing Director	HR Consulting Firm	Early 50s	Male	Married	Muslim
Malaysian	AZ Managing Director	Marketing, Training and Development Consultancy	Early 40s	Male	In a relationship	Muslim
Australian	RH Shareholder and Consultant	Consulting Services	Early 40s	Male	Married	Grew up Anglican. Has a personal relationship with God.
Australian	SF Director and Consultant	Consulting Services	Mid 40s	Female	In a relationship	Attraction to Indigenous (African) beliefs of a presence of a "Force" (won't call it God), guided by an "Inner Purpose"

Table 5.2 Profile of Business Management Consultants

5.5.2 Narrative interview with business consultants

The narrative interview technique was used for data gathering from the four business consultants. Prior to commencement of the actual interview, the four participants were provided preliminary information explaining this research project. To provide a general guide to prompt participants in the specific direction of the research objectives, a brief set of five guiding questions were developed. The rationale for the questions is justified through various pertinent

responses received from the four consultants interviewed in the following section. The five guiding questions were:

Q1. Can you briefly explain about your interest in the subject area of spirituality? What's your story?

Q2. Do you think that spiritual dimensions are relevant to your work as a business consultant?

Q3. Can you relate events or occasions in your work as a consultant, when you may have seen or experienced a clear relevance of spirituality in the workplace?

Q4. In your opinion as a professional business consultant, do you think spiritual values might become increasingly important in the future world of business and work?

Q5. In your opinion do you think consulting firms might integrate and advance spiritual-based values within their consulting packages to clients in the corporate world?

5.5.2.1 Establishing consultants' position on spirituality

All four consultants interviewed had a religious or spiritual practice or belief system. One consultant from Australia in particular recognised the importance of starting the interview with the first question (*Q1*). He said towards the end of his interview:

"I think your first question asking me how I got into this subject of spirituality...how I actually started...is actually a really interesting and a really important question because how I respond to this question...The person who asked me that question (in this case the researcher) is interpreting everything I say, to see if this thing called spirituality relates to me or is relevant to me or not....because if I told you I became interested in spirituality because it was a good idea – it will give you a pretty good picture whether I really buy into the concept or not. I openly share my spiritual experience with transparency and authenticity, as I no longer need for others to engage with it. If they do, fine, if they don't, I don't really mind." (RH)

RH who was a shareholder in the Consulting firm he worked at, was an experienced executive coach, an accomplished workplace facilitator and has expertise in assessing and developing leadership capability, sales performance, team effectiveness and individual self-awareness using his Consultancy firms' Emotional Intelligence Assessment Instrument. RH was able to pick up on the significance and value of the first question because being an experienced Consultant and his extensive knowledge of the consulting industry allows him to make the following critical assessment when in a later part of the interview he says;

“You know it’s amazing there are times I’ve seen Consultants who don’t have any meditative practice of their own, conduct meditation session in a training program! So how does that work? You are training other people when you don’t do it yourself, they are exploring spiritual practice with others when they haven’t got a spiritual journey of their own... It’s challenging because, ultimately a corporation which is going to invest money in a consulting firm to take them on a spiritual journey is answerable to a whole range of people. Whether it be the CEO, the board, the shareholders and all those wondering about “what is the return on investment, what is the tangible benefit of exploring spirituality, how do you measure its success?”...and that in part in my mind flies against the whole essence of what spirituality is.” (RH, see Appendix 5.5.2.1 for full excerpt)

The excerpt above clearly demonstrates some of the pitfalls associated with a subject like spirituality in business management. RH was somewhat cynical of some in the business consulting practice where practitioners without any personal experience or practice of spirituality are conducting training programs related to spirituality with clients. RH who was himself enrolled in a PhD program studying spirituality, was deeply spiritual with a disciplined practice of daily meditation. His own spiritual faith evolved from an Anglican religious background and thru some difficult traumatic experiences in youth and eventually having a profound personal experience with the God-factor as partly narrated in the following excerpt (See Appendix 5.5.2.1 for full excerpt).

“In my mid 20’s I had periods of depression. But I switched off from spirituality, except when I was in crisis I would pray to God. I had two way conversations with God and my brother who had died...then I heard my best friend since I was 15 had committed suicide due to depression and many farmers and farmer’s kids from my small town committed suicide. Then just after 9/11 I started to have lots of questions....It brought a catalytic moment.” (RH)

RH continues to narrate a detailed ‘conversation’ he had with his “guardian angel” who then introduced him to “God”. This he said happened one day in late 2003 when he was in the shower. In his conversation with God, he was asked if he was ready to take on his life purpose and RH was told his mission in life. Since then, his life purpose now is very much related to the conversation with God that day. This significant event is repeated as a personal narrative to anyone he thinks may be genuinely interested, including his clients with whom he claims he is able to explicitly discuss the subject and that people are generally interested in the subject area. He reiterates that his life decisions are guided and strongly influenced by that significant incident. Given his own spiritual growth and development he was profoundly able to appraise and critique some of the issues related to distinguishing authentic spiritual practice from those peddlers who are currently out to cash in on its mock pop influence. Thus this participant with his unique expertise was able to see the value of the first question which was directed mainly at separating genuine practitioners from unauthentic ones out to capitalise on the current popularity of the subject.

The second Consultant from Australia, was SF a director and consultant in a small consultancy firm, specialising in eco-literacy and sustainable leadership practices in the areas of leader and leadership development, women in management & leadership, strategies for a maturing workforce etc. SF has also explored practical applications on how to apply and develop spiritual principles within a leadership context. Unlike RH, SF was deeply opposed to the word God. Born in Africa, SF developed an unusual attraction to African indigenous culture. She

insists she doesn't have a belief, but has a deep sense of connectedness to all living and potentially non-living things by what she calls, a connecting "force". When asked if she would call this "force" God, this was her response:

"Absolutely not! Not God! I'm rebellious by nature and the thought of one powerful figure called God, especially the way it's being sold...I'm cynical about it. I think it is arrogant to sell One Being called God. I have no dogma around it, but I've always had mentors who were spiritual and so my conversations with my mentors who were "alternative people" always gave me a spiritual alternative. So although career wise and professionally I have pursued a typical path, but in my other world I've been on an unusual journey, whether it's doing meditation retreats, popping into an ashram and the like." (SF)

Her response above again indicates the predominantly Western phenomenon of distancing from the God-factor. In her response there is evidence of distrust against those who "sell" the concept of God, clearly deriding the religious authorities and preferring to explore her own personal relationship with the "force". In her story SF also similar to RH's story, recounts a significant event when she experienced an incredibly moving moment in the forest when she felt connected to all things in the forest. She is unable to speak about that moment without being moved to tears every single time. She said she felt a oneness, describing her experience as:

"I felt one with the trees; I felt one with the insects and with everything. It was an overwhelming feeling of something huge yet it was nothing. It's hard to put labels on it. It feels arrogant to give it a word like God. I now enjoy conversations with a new group of people who are into "evolution of consciousness". Someone explained to me the balance between the rational phenomenological world and the empty world inside. Recently I've had an "aha" moment when I finally understood what meditation was – to get into the emptiness. The same I felt that day in the forest. Now I think it is my purpose...it is like a goal inside me now." (SF)

From the contrast of these two Consultants (who incidentally are good friends), it is clear that the experience of spirituality is very personal and unique and very different from one individual to the next. The profound shift to an inner experience can happen in mundanely

unexpected moment (such as in the shower, or during a walk in a forest), but analysing the childhood backgrounds of these individuals almost always reveal that they already have a tendency or disposition and a curiosity towards knowing or experiencing transcendental revelations.

On the Eastern sample, the two Malaysian consultants, both liberal Muslims, consistent with their counterparts in the Malaysian business leaders sample had a religious faith and seem to have a deep appreciation of various other religious faiths present in multi-cultural Malaysia. Each citing various examples of childhood experiences when they grew up exposed and appreciative of various religious celebrations in Malaysia and therefore now in their own Consultancy firms which they own, religious occasions of every denomination in the country is celebrated and observed in their own offices with their co-workers.

“We go for religious classes’ right from young. As Muslims, we pray five times a day and we also belief in the here-after. My view of God is very simple – just as there is a maker for the physical things you see (pointing to chairs and tables), there is also a Creator for this earth, planet and galaxies, a Supreme, higher, greater and more powerful than all of us..Islam is a way of life. A lot of things that we are only discovering today is already written in the Quran. We are here for a reason and I suppose sometimes it is clear, sometimes it is not. I know that all religions, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity - we are all taught to be good people, to be good to human kind. For me, we must do the best we can....although this is a Muslim company, I practice the Malaysian culture. For example for Christmas I have a Christmas tree and we exchange presents. For Deepavali (Hindu Festival of Lights), we have a “kolam” or “rangoli” (floor art of intricate patterns made of rice floor or coloured rice).” (KNA)

“We in the East are overly influenced by the secular West, but historically, in the 18th century, the separation of the Church and the state didn’t happen in Asia. For most people in these parts of the world, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism is a way of life. It cannot be separated from anything in life. It is illogical to separate. For example for us Muslims, Science and Religion are one...In school I was very interested in “Agama” (Islamic

religious class). My teachers however couldn't answer a lot of my questions. Fortunately, I had an elder sister who was able to challenge my mind with rational alternative viewpoints... In university, I noticed marginalisation of other races. For example pork was not served in the university hostel to be sensitive to Malays who can't eat pork, but they served beef, being quite insensitive to Indians who were Hindu. In my office there is a ruling, No pork, no beef. We also observe Malaysian customs, such as removing our shoes when we step into our office. We celebrate all Malaysian festivals. It is good to see my Malay staff putting up Christmas and Deepavali or Chinese New Year decorations in the office during various festivals.” (AZ, see Appendix 5.5.2.1 for full excerpt)

The two Muslim Consultants from Malaysia, reiterate the influence of strong multiculturalism present in the Malaysian context that is deeply ingrained in the cultural and social heritage of individuals there. Both these consultants in their narration depict the strong influence of a collective culture and a religious tradition that strongly influenced the formation of spiritual ideals within them at an early age. The early socialisation of their childhood with strong religious-cultural foundations is carried forth to maturity where in their respective offices a healthy attitude towards different religious festivals is observed. Again it is apparent from the excerpts above, for KNA and AZ the concept of God is accepted as a given and religion seen as part and parcel of every aspect of daily life, including work. Again the ‘brotherhood’ spirit of Muslims is clearly reflected in their responses when they frequently use the terms “we” and “us” when speaking of their religious beliefs even though they are speaking for themselves. AZ makes it very obvious when he points out that although Asians are highly influenced by secular western worldviews, they never experienced the so-called separation of state and church that took place in 18th century in the west. Henceforth religion has always remained an important and essential part of lives for people in the non-western world. This Consultant views himself as a change agent and a social entrepreneur, and makes no excuse for his love of religion and culture. He insists he spent more time reading about Hinduism, Chinese philosophy, Buddhism, Christianity and his own Islamic faith, instead of learning his coursework in the university. A strong advocate of

social integration, AZ's business also publishes various books in his "books to unite people series". He believes in the Malaysian spirit which he says has been eroded by divisive racial politics that has threatens the underlying unity between the races in Malaysia. He is known in local circles for his eccentric full page advertisements in national newspapers promoting racial harmony and integration, promoting universal values citing from all the major religious traditions in Malaysia. Using meaningful quotes from respective religious or spiritual leaders of that particular tradition every year, his aim is to instil pride in people for their own rich religious cultural heritage which is generally waning in knowledge and interest. For example for Christmas, since 2002, he has taken out full page advertisements citing quotes from Jubal Lourdes, Teaching a Meaningful Profession; Mother Teresa, Working with Spirit; Martin Luther King, True Performance is About Results; Pope John Paul II, To be Happy at Work; St. Francis of Asisi, Do unto Others; Oscar Romero, Capacity, Performance, People, Skill, Integrity; Saint Bonaventure, What Malaysians Want: Development without Corruption. It's a sample of the kind of quotes he publishes in advertisements at least 7 times a year citing from the Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, Sikh, Christian and Islamic traditions and from famous respected Malaysian leaders for Malaysia Day. The Consultants from Malaysia lay proof to the fact that the unique impressions formed during childhood and youth within a strong religious-cultural climate becomes a framework of ideals carried through to maturity. For all participants East and West formation of life ideals and personal values appears to take root at the critical impressionable age of childhood and youth.

5.5.2.2 Relevance of spiritual dimensions in the work of business consultants

The questions posed to the Consultants were to obtain their views on whether spiritual dimensions were relevant to their work. All the four Consultants positively saw relevance. The following excerpts represent some of their viewpoints.

“Spirituality operates within and beyond me at a conscious level, in choices I make and how I interpret events in my life. At an unconscious level it’s who I am. So it fuses in my work because I would be inauthentic with myself if I didn’t consider spirituality in all that I do... In my daily work, you know the training that I do, the coaching that I do, the materials that I pull together for my clients all have a spiritual-based principles in them. I guess my lens through which I view the world is in part infused by my spiritual path.” (RH, for full excerpt see Appendix 5.5.2.2.)

RH in his response also spoke about the difficulties and conflicts he had with his own colleagues in the Consultancy firm who did not understand or share his spiritual beliefs. As one of the five senior leadership team at his firm, RH feels responsible and wants to make his team members understand. He says they are all open to the idea and his role is to understand the path others walk rather than get others to understand the (spiritual) path he is walking. He however has had some success in creating a level of awareness in his firm for instance;

“I initiated meditation sessions before our meetings in the office. There was a curiosity about what is meditation to begin with. How can it help me? So we suggest how meditation improves self-awareness and self-management and dealing with strong emotions and intuition and all that stuff that relates also to our work on emotional intelligence and resilience...” (RH, see Appendix 5.5.2.2 for full excerpt)

So the above example highlights how a person who has spiritual inclinations, functions in the outer world out of his inner world dimensions and has the ability to influence others particularly if he was in a position of power in his workplace. As a consultant RH who is deeply spiritual in his inner world also reveals that the materials he uses with clients are often infused with spiritual principles (sometimes implicitly, other times explicitly) and thus RH illustrates how his life purpose of showing an alternative path for society he does in a fine and delicate way through his work with his business clients.

SF shares a similar viewpoint as RH when asked about relevance of spiritual dimensions in her work. She responds:

“Absolutely! We (consultants) are in fact in a position of potential especially when you become very trusted with your clients. Consultants have the ability to shift mind-sets and the way of being at very high levels in corporations. I don’t believe governments can change the world, but those with money can and money is with the corporate. Executive coaches do it all the time...” (SF, see Appendix 5.5.2.2 for full excerpt)

Both the Western consultants were clear that Consultants play a critical role as change agents in society by influencing business clients towards contributing to a creation of a better world. They reveal that often consultants may cloak spiritual values in acceptable or palatable language to first gain trust and once they develop trust and intimacy with their clients, it becomes easy to discuss philosophical dimensions with their clients. SF brings to light that many consultants who are her friends in the consulting business are already doing exactly this, citing the example of a high profile former CEO of ANZ bank who was renowned in the industry for his pioneering efforts to integrate spiritual values into the banking culture. She confides he was influenced by a close associate of hers in the Consulting industry. On the Eastern side, AZ provides an interesting narration to question two:

“We definitely infuse spiritual values in all my training programs. For e.g. we have a program called “Making a Difference” (MAD) a lot of the concepts presented in this program is borrowed from various religious scriptures, the Quran, the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita etc...It is a program designed to help clients change from within. We criss-cross all the traditions, citing various quotes from various religious text. Of course we don’t shout and scream about our spiritual sources, but we don’t mask it either.” (AZ, for full excerpt see Appendix 5.5.2.2)

In this example from the East it is evident that this Consultant freely uses teachings from a variety of religious denominations to deliver his training programs and insist that the large majority of his clients begin to appreciate the universal values that is observed to be present in various religious teachings. An important point made by this consultant is that most Malaysians do not simply ‘tolerate’ but ‘accept’ various faiths even though most are not literate about religious traditions other than their own. He highlights also that the divisive tendencies is often

incited through political motives and rarely present in the social fabric of the country. His optimistic views are reflective of his life calling which he says is to “unite people using business as my platform”. This participant goes to the extent of suggesting that it ought to be the role of consultants to educate people in business that spirituality is an integral part of any business or work, citing the following example to make this point.

“Peter Drucker says the purpose of business is one and one only – to create a customer either thru innovation, advertising and marketing, sales and credit. Any one of these four methods creates a customer, which creates jobs and adds value to society. The problem is, most people cannot link what they do on a day to day basis with spirituality. We need to help them understand that when you go to work and do a good job, and contribute towards society thru value creation, then that’s spirituality. This is what I explain to my clients thru my various training programs. Spirituality as what most religious teachings present is simply a way of life. Work can’t be separate from your way of life. The Management gurus like Peter Senge, Stephen Covey and Drucker, their writings too were spiritual.” (AZ, for full excerpt see Appendix 5.5.2.2)

AZ a passionate advocate of learning from religious denominations of every kind suggest in his response above that when a business person does a good job, that is him being spiritual. He has a very optimistic view of business persons, saying all entrepreneurs are social entrepreneurs because they create jobs. And as long as they are doing so, they are contributing to society. He also adds that many of his clients from the corporate world are highly philosophical, because once they achieve a measure of success in their business, they want to contribute back to society, and sometimes they set up foundations or donate to charity or take on a social cause.

“Especially a business person who has experienced a business crisis, they start to connect to the Almighty. So for most it is a natural progression. So business provides an avenue to reach Nirvana or attain Moksha (spiritual liberation), just like any good person goes to heaven, a good business person also would go to Heaven. God the ultimate creator, call him whatever you want is merciful, kind and all loving...Work is one of the biggest avenues that God has provided so that we can go to Heaven.” (AZ, for full excerpt see Appendix 5.5.2.2)

The responses from the four Consultants interviewed highlight that in the corporate world there is already a shift occurring especially with senior business personnel particularly those who've had a measure of success in business as they often turn towards contributing back to society. Also the perception towards spirituality is changing for e.g. RH in the following response disclosed some specific examples that highlight the spirituality phenomenon occurring in the world of business:

“When I first started, finding anyone interested in spirituality was really difficult. I used to present to industry groups and people generally saw no relevance to spirituality at all. Increasingly, now I think the organisations are a lot more open to it because I think they are looking for answers when all the answers you have no longer work, you have to look elsewhere. There are many clients on big salaries who confide they have no meaning in their lives...My work help in their self-discovery, sometimes leaving me conflicted, because I'm hired to get the top brass motivated to perform and many confide they want to leave! Many of them are stressed out...I notice there is greater readiness in my clients to explore spirituality or when I talked God they are receptive as in business many are seeking meaning especially with all that uncertainty out there.” (RH)

This participant also gave some insight of the receptivity of Australians to the topic of spirituality as compared to Americans. RH confides that in the Australian workplaces this topic is still very much taboo, remaining an undercurrent. He says when he was in the US he could freely ask explicitly “What’s your religion?” but here in Australia he says many will be offended or tell you to mind your own business. He said on one occasion during his work travels to the US, he walked into a bookstore and was surprised to find an entire section for spiritual magazines, as there are sections for health, beauty etc. This he says shows that the Americans are more open to the subject of spirituality and religion while in Australia, people are less inclined.

On whether consulting firms would advance spiritual values all four consultants responded in the affirmative highlighting that current issues in the world such as climate change, economic crashes, poverty, over-population all indicate that no one is taking real responsibility and this

trend will lead people to turn inwards for peace and meaning. However the two Western consultants presented this caution:

“Although people are coming out to talk more loudly about this topic in the Consulting circles, there’s one thing I don’t want to happen is for spirituality to be productised. Many think if you are spiritual you must only be good. People need to understand that spirituality is not about being good, it’s about acceptance - that human beings have contradictions; they have the light and shadow sides. We need to understand that if we don’t deal with the dark side, it will get darker and darker. So instead of using the word spirituality I might prefer to use the word “inner purpose” with my clients...Spirituality is about connection and continuity and we can’t turn someone spiritual in 4 days. So we need to be careful with the language that we use to package the programs, perhaps “coaching” is a better word as it suggest on-going-ness.” (SF, for full excerpt see Appendix 5.5.2.2)

This participant clearly worries that “spiritual consulting packages” would have a commercial motive and as such would not do justice to what it means to be spiritual, highlighting that it’s a long-term internal process which involves time and effort and a degree of guidance. The other consultant RH, raised his doubts whether consulting firms will be quick to take on this challenge because most clients are answerable to powers above for a clear return on investment for a hired consulting package. As spirituality is not a tangible outcome to be easily measured, it would be difficult to justify spirituality as a consulting package in accounting terms.

The Eastern consultants on the other hand capitalised on the religious foundations in the society to deliver training programs that were explicitly or implicitly infused with spiritual dimensions and did not seem to have any reservations about marketing their Consulting packages to clients although there too there was a tendency to avoid overt use of religious language except when a strong relationship is fostered between consultant and clients. Overall, the view from these four Consultants suggests that there is a strong need and impetus for Consultants to drive change the world of business by infusing spiritual values within their consulting packages. The

interviews reveal that this was already saliently happening in the Consulting industry in both Australia and Malaysia.

Thus the spiritual growth from the lower (ego-self) to higher (true-self) realm of being for all - beginning from conventional to post-conventional to some extent explains the differences in the research findings between the Eastern and Western sample. At some stage in most individual's life, the experience of the "dark night of the self" or "dark night of the soul" results in a search for something more or something else often resulting in transformational shifts from the lower to the higher order needs. When this occurs individuals seek meaning and fulfilment, often turning inwards after the fickle nature of external passing thrills and interest have withered or waned. In many cases, life events such as personal or health-related traumas thrashes the individual personalities to an extent of anguish and suffering that result in a movement away from the external world that is constantly changing. These individuals seek spiritual comfort from a steadier and more enduring inner world dimension that provides a sense of inner strength, peace and joy from within. On the subject of morals and ethics, it is to do with the practical norms of what is acceptable or non-acceptable behaviour in any given culture, each with its own conventions. This is dependent upon the stages of moral development within each individual, ranging from pre-conventional to conventional to post-conventional, correspondingly acting out of egocentric, ethnocentric or world-centric worldviews. According to Ken Wilber (2006), another way to picture this is through the concepts of body, mind and spirit.

5.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This Chapter has further presented findings on the relationship between spiritual awareness, personal values and its impact on the workplace. This research submits that the more the individual personality grows towards a spiritual world-centric world view, through states and stages of interior consciousness, the greater the likelihood of the personality embracing universal

concerns and global issues in a spirit of oneness with all other beings and nature in the exterior world. For business practitioners and business consultants alike, the higher their spiritual awareness, greater the evidence of infusing their work with their workplace values that are based on higher spiritual principles. This theme is continued into the next Phase of this research where an in-depth analysis was conducted on business leaders with high awareness of their spiritual self. It considers the extent of impact their inner spiritual values has on their exterior world particularly in their respective workplaces. Phase II presented in Chapter 6 describes the findings from three in-depth case-studies that further prove this positive co-relation between a leader's spiritual growth and a correspondingly constructive impact upon the workplace.

CHAPTER SIX

PHASE II: CASE STUDIES OF SPIRITUALLY INSPIRED BUSINESS LEADERS

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.

Lao Tzu

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters presented the findings of Phase I of this research highlighting how spiritual values, beliefs and practices play an important role in the inner life of research participants. Chapter Four and Five presented findings from the Phase I interviews with senior business leaders while Chapter Five also presented the independent views of management consultants to augment the findings of the senior business leaders. Out of the twelve business leaders interviewed in Phase I, four agreed to participate in Phase II of this study, however due to unavoidable circumstances finally only three were able to participate. This chapter presents the final collection of data comprising these three key participants who were formally interviewed for a second time and observed in multiple scenarios to gather an in-depth account of their impact and influence upon their extended lives particularly within their respective work organisations.

The findings from Phase I indicated that there appear to be a strong co-relation between the personal values of these leaders and their self-perceived values relevant to the workplace. The aim was to triangulate the findings using multiple sources, with data collected from narrative interviews with members of their respective organisations. Family members were also included in Phase II interviews to further obtain a fuller image of these key participants. By this stage, the researcher also has had sufficient time to establish a friendly and intimate rapport with all key participants and engaged with all three respondents and their families on several occasions both formally and informally. This was important for building trust and friendship with them over the

course of this research period. This trusting and friendly rapport provides for a useful multi-level dimensional representation of the research topic studied from multiple angles using different sources related to the three key participants.

6.2 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The three case-studies conducted in Phase II of this research are labelled Case-study M1 and M2 to represent the Malaysian participants and A1 to represent the single Australian key participant.

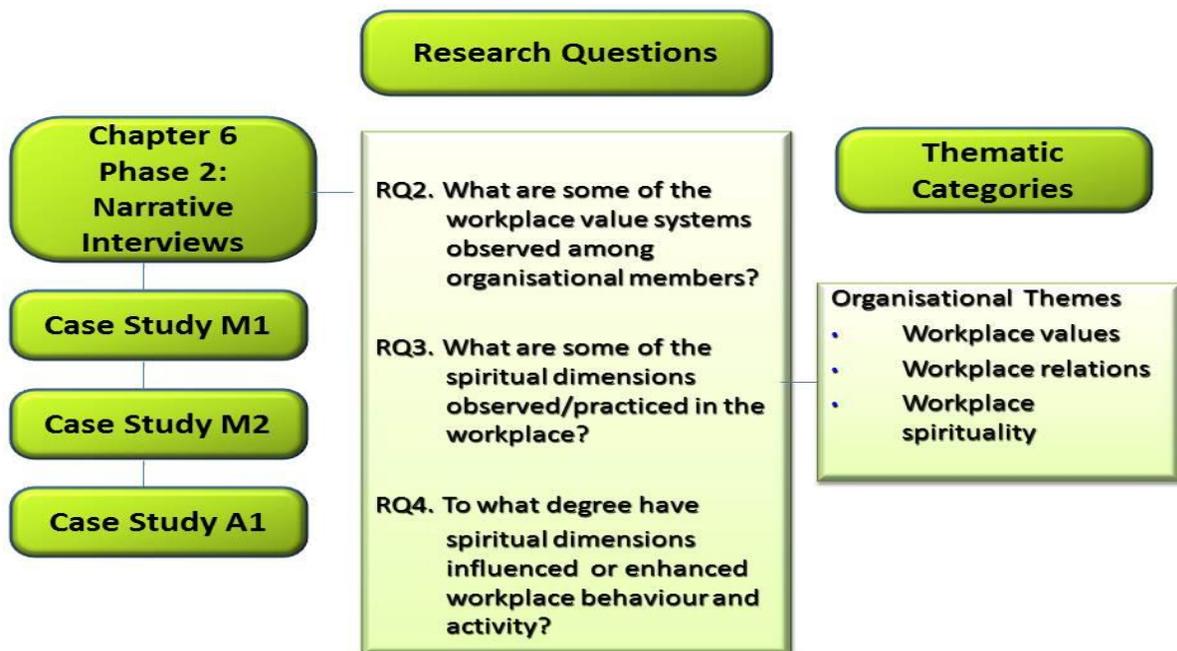


Figure 6.1 Outline of Phase II Case Studies

The three research questions and the thematic categories resulting from the analysis is presented in Figure 6.1. Phase II was designed to gather in-depth data on what might be the impact of business leaders with spiritual beliefs upon workplace values and relations and also to consider the relevance of workplace spirituality within their respective organisational perspectives. Therefore, the data presented in this chapter addresses the three RQs depicted in

Figure 6.1. It encapsulates the rich and varied depictions obtained from the individual experiences of the three key participants.

These were further augmented with interviews conducted along with their intimate family members. This provided a multi-faceted scrutiny of the primary participants as family members were an important source of information to strengthen and authenticate the findings gathered in Phase I. This was followed by a series of narrative interviews conducted with organisational members or significant stakeholders associated with the key participant, which provided further in-depth insights into the impact and influence of these key participants held within their respective organisations and also the larger community. Profile of all Phase II participants in the three case studies representing the Eastern and Western sample, detailing interview visits, location and data sources were presented in Chapter 3.

6.3 MALAYSIAN CASE STUDIES

For the two Malaysian case studies (M1 and M2) the following sub-section presents the company profiles followed by relevant content of narratives with the key informant, members of their families, co-workers and relevant others. For the purpose of maintaining anonymity and confidentiality, the three key participants will be referred with pseudonyms. The 1st key participant from the Malaysian case-study M1 is from here forth known as M1KP, and the 2nd key participant from the Malaysian case-study will be known as M2KP. The key participant in the Australian case-study is known as A1KP.

6.3.1 Case Study M1: Company and key participant profile

The first case-study (M1) in Malaysia was conducted with M1KP who is the Executive Chairman of a firm which engages primarily in providing project management and construction management services to public and private clients in Malaysia. The firm was first incorporated as

a fully owned branch of a group of Companies in the UK to provide commercial and contract services to construction companies in Malaysia. In the late 1980's Malaysia embarked on the implementation of mega infrastructure projects which spurred developments in other sectors of its economy. In such a booming economy a niche market providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) Services became an absolute necessity. To capitalize on the opportunities present in the local market M1KP, who was the local Partner and Director, re-named the company to include local equity and management participation and pursued those PMC contracts. Its goal was to be a premier Project Management Company in Malaysia. Soon after, the firm was awarded a landmark contract by the Malaysian government to oversee and project-manage the building of the National Sports Complex in time for the 1998 Commonwealth Games held in Kuala Lumpur. The firm was also appointed as PMC for the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur and other huge projects across Malaysia, while simultaneously providing professional and technical help to international contractors.

In 2000 the company was again re-named to reflect the 100% buy-over of the company from the UK by Malaysians, maintaining its international network of associate companies, whose in-depth professional knowledge, experience and expertise are easily and readily accessible and assured. When M1KP was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of the new firm in 1994, he introduced the philosophy of being a caring corporate citizen. It was enshrined in the firm's Mission statement that up to 20% of company profits were to be channelled towards the less developed or more wanting sector of the community in the form of various contributions and grants.

The Projects completed by M1 range in cost from smaller projects beginning in the range of US\$26 million up to US\$210 million for the larger projects. The firm covers the full range of project management services from design stage through to occupation and operation. The firm is

reputed to be a leading PMC in Malaysia through its exposure and experience in managing notable mega projects in the country. The company's website cites:

“The secret of our success hinges on teamwork and inculcating excellence among team-members. The blend of very experienced and matured multi-disciplined expatriates together with relatively young Malaysian professionals in the company has created a balanced professional team that brings to any project, tested and proven local talent as well as in-depth knowledge and experience of core foreign professionals in their specialised areas.”

It is obvious that M1 has a good network of specialised technical expertise available through established strong links with specialist consultancies. This allows the firm to offer a comprehensive range of professional services and personnel for managing the range of specialist projects to best meet various clients' objectives. This covers Consultancy services encompassing input from project identification through feasibility, finance, engineering, procurement, construction to commissioning, handover and maintenance by working with developers and contractors. At the time of the interview, due to an economic downturn and dearth of government projects, the company had downscaled its operations and had a total staff strength of about 10 personnel including sub-contractors. The researcher was informed that at its peak the company had between 30 to 40 personnel employed.

The Company brochure features the company motto “Vision to Reality”. On the back page of the brochure, a small photograph featuring M1KP's image is framed with a caption that reads as follows:

“The driving force behind this organisation's vision to reality is “M1KP” our Executive Chairman. His commitment to excellence is not only in his professional work but also in social, religious and sporting organisations. He is involved in more than twenty such organisations in Malaysia, India, South Africa and Australia. Where does he find time and energy for all his involvements? His answer is; “Complete faith in our Creator gives me all that I want, through my prayers.”

Evidently, this participant openly declares his faith to the extent of printing this declaration in black and white on his firm's official company brochure.

6.3.1.1 Profile of participants in Malaysian Case Study M1

No.	Interviewee	Relationship to Key Informant	Age Range	Gender	Years Known	Religious or Spiritual Belief
1	M1KP	(Key Participant)	Early 60s	Male	Divorced and re-married	Muslim
Narrative interview with family members (FM)						
2	M1FM1	Wife	Early 60s	Female	Over 20 years	Hindu converted to Muslim
3	M1FM2	Grand-daughter (adopted)	9 years old	Female	9 years	Catholic
4	M1FM3	Sister	Late 30s	Female	Over 30 yrs	Muslim
Narrative interviews with co-workers (CW)						
5	M1CW1	Chief Executive Officer in firm	Late 30s	Female	Over 5 years	Muslim
6	M1CW2	Advisor of Human Resource and Finance in Firm	Mid 60's	Male	16 years	Muslim
7	M1CW3	Finance and Administration Manager in Firm	Mid 30's	Female	10 years	Hindu
8	M1CW4	Project Secretary to one of the firms' current project	Mid 20's	Female	6 months	Hindu
Observation and informal information gathered from other casual informants (CI)						
9	M1CI1	Driver	Early 40s	Male	NA	NA
10	M1CI2	Inspector Of Tamil Schools -	Middle Aged	Male	NA	NA
11	M1CI3	Organiser of Official Awards Function	Middle Aged	Male	NA	NA
12	M1CI4	University Student	Early 20s	Female	NA	NA
13	M1CI5 (multiple)	Parents of Student	Approx. 30-60	Males and Females	NA	NA
14	M1CI6 (multiple)	Group of school students met at Awards Function	Between 10 – 17 years old	Males and Females	NA	NA

Table 6.1 Profile of Participants in Case Study M1

Table 6.1 presents the brief profile of participants who were interviewed to provide layers of information based on their personal or professional relationship with the key Malaysian participant (M1KP) of Case-study M1. The table highlights that data was collected from four main categorical sources, namely the key participant (KP), his family members (FM), his co-workers (CW) and also from other casual informants (CI). Apart from some brief bio data, such as age, gender and relationship and years known to key informant, the table also lists the spiritual or religious belief of all informants.

6.3.1.2 Self disclosure by M1KP-Key (Eastern) business leader

A brief profile of M1KP was provided in section 6.3.1. His interest, willingness and availability to participate in Phase II of this study was the basis of his inclusion for the more intensive case-study Phase II. M1KP who is Muslim by faith arrived in Malaysia at the age of four with his parents from India.

a) Strong role models in family

M1KP's father was a businessman who ran a grocery retail business hence, business was in his blood from a very young age. After completing his studies, M1KP saw opportunities to pursue business ventures in various industries. M1KP relates;

“In 1985 I started my own company because I had always wanted to be an entrepreneur, just as my father and grandfather had been.”

When his business suffered during the economic recession in the mid-1980s, M1KP left for the United Kingdom to further his studies, but instead teamed up with a friend and started a restaurant in Oxford St., London. Returning to Malaysia soon after, he joined a Project based Construction Consulting firm rising in rank from a business director, becoming the managing director, chief executive officer and finally executive chairman. He also progressively increased ownership of the firm. He began by owning only 30% shares of the firm, rising to a 70%

shareholder in 1997 and by 2000 he bought over the whole equity of the company, changing the name and remaining a successful business with a strong project management team comprising local and international professionals of various disciplines in engineering, architecture, quantity surveying, building services, building technology and safety & health management.

b) Socio-political entrepreneur

Beyond his business ventures, M1KP is also a respected public figure, moving in the high socialite circles of politicians, entrepreneurs and activist in Malaysia. His connections within the political circles have aided his success in the business arena due to a number of huge government contracts acquired by his firm. M1KP uses his political clout to advance his social-welfare agenda. He is particularly known to champion the cause of vernacular Tamil schools where a large number of students from under privileged backgrounds attend these under-funded schools in Malaysia. He is also a noted philanthropist, the founder of a Muslim Welfare organisation in the northern state of Perak in Malaysia and advisor to several mosque committees, Indian Muslim Associations, as well as several youth and sports associations in Malaysia. His philanthropy is not limited to Malaysia. For example, he is involved with an Islamic Centre for the Physically Handicapped in a village in Sri Lanka and donates for charities in India and even Mongolia.

c) Overcoming hardships

Although, M1KP appears to have scaled the heights of success, his down to earth and compassionate nature he attributes to learning strong values having experienced difficulties in early youth. He recalls when his father's business suffered a huge loss in the early 1960's he was only fourteen years old and underwent many hardships.

“I remember waking up at 5am to pick up copies of The Straits Times (local daily) and deliver them from house to house.”

He also earned extra money doing odd jobs in the early mornings before going to school. Events in his life took a turn for the worse when his parents had to return to India leaving him to complete his studies in Malaysia. Eventually he had to fend for himself and became homeless.

“The first few nights, I slept at the Ipoh (a northern Malaysian city) bus station and during the day I worked at the wet market. I survived on a loaf of bread and black coffee. I studied at the bus station or the railway station.”

This sad turn of events in his life, from being chauffeur-driven to school when his dad’s business was thriving to becoming homeless at the bus-stop for shelter was difficult and deeply ingrained in his memory. He was embarrassed to inform his teachers as his family used to be foremost in making financial contributions to local schools. During those difficult times, a significant event changed his life for the better. A kind lady of Hindu faith who had casually known his family offered for him to stay at her house. She raised him as her son and her own children considered him their elder brother. He finished school and remains grateful to this woman and her family who adopted him. This significant event in his life has shaped his dedication towards helping children and youth saying

“I would like to achieve more in terms of providing and giving light to children who are in the same situation that I was in.”

This last statement he makes provides a clue as to how his present life motivations are distinctly shaped by his own past life events.

d) Near death experience

MIKP also relates a story often - his close brush with death on four different occasions. The first was in 1973 when he was involved in a bad road accident that landed him in intensive care in a coma for 15 days. He informs that the doctors had given up hope but the prayers of his late grandma, mother and family saw him pull through that event. Then in 1977 he cheated death when he met an old friend at the airport, and deciding to catch up with his old class mate and

changing to a later flight, he did not board the ill-fated flight that later crashed, which remains on record as the worst airline tragedy in Malaysia. The air crash left no survivors killing over 100 passengers and crew on board. Escaping an ill-fated flight happened twice in his life. The second was an occasion when he missed a flight from Tokyo due to an over-turned tanker that blocked the journey to the airport. That missed flight, which also crashed meant he cheated death by air-crash twice. Then in 2003, during one of his routine travels interstate on his return journey his trusted driver of many years fell asleep at the wheel causing the car they were travelling in to turn turtle on the highway. He survived the accident and so did his driver who continues to work for him in the same capacity till this day. He is convinced that in all his close shaves with death it was divine intervention that saved him and each time his faith in his Creator has intensified.

e) Corrupt business environments: Value-conflict

M1KP bemoans the fact that the current business climate lacks good values. He alludes to the rampant decline in ethical practice occurring in the business arena evidenced by mounting corruption and administrative misconduct, lacking in integrity or spirituality as a grave concern in the overall political, judiciary and civil service systems in the country. He says the decline in values has caused many past great civilisations to become extinct, and M1KP fears the same will occur to his beloved Malaysia. His passion for re-igniting time honoured values and in inspiring others with his socio-political ideals is something he speaks passionately about, particularly the importance of personal integrity and trust. He says the older generation who held religious and spiritual values displayed more of the needed good values as compared to the younger generation who are lacking in them. His passion in this regard can be clearly observed in this speech he wrote and presented at a political rally in 2009 (see Figure 6.2).

Corrupt business environments causes great conflict for a leader who has strong spiritual values. Business success in M1KP's case was partly due to his political allies in government,

winning government projects which are competitive and difficult to acquire. However, M1KP complains how national values in the Malaysian scenario are eroding as the new generation seem to look for hand-outs rather than rely on meritocracy and working hard. On one point M1KP requested the researcher to switch off the recorder when he shared disturbing information about some corrupt practices in the local Malaysian business environment? In respecting his request for confidentiality on the matter, this information is omitted in this discussion.

As a member of the “MARGINALISED COMMUNITY” in Malaysia, I still believe in:
‘OUR BELOVED COUNTRY MALAYSIA’
You are blessed to live in a wonderful country like Malaysia with abundant opportunities available to you like nowhere else.
All you have to do is work hard; you are not the privileged lot; nothing will be handed to you. Use your education and success in life to help those trapped in cycles of poverty and oppression.
Above all never lose faith in Malaysia.
Its fault due to some incompetent leaders and administrators are yours to fix, not to curse.
Let us “UNITE AS MALAYSIANS” and continue the change of March 2008 to continue to bring about a TRULY MULTI-RACIAL MALAYSIA A REALITY.
Let us say ‘NO’ to RACE BASED politics and RACIAL FANATISM. Another POLITICAL TSUNAMI is coming for the good of all Malaysian, Insyah Allah (God Willing). May Almighty Allah save Malaysia from the declining religious, moral, social and political values.

Figure 6.2 Excerpt of Speech by M1KP’s - Presented at a Political Rally in 2009

For this leader, living by his values meant that he had to bear the brunt of difficult circumstances when he refused to sway from his inner values. Business contracts were no longer rolling in when he decided to join an opposition political party. Government contracts dwindled and also due to an economic slowdown, M1KP has considerably down-sized his business and also diversified into areas that are relatively free from corrupt business practice. This personal sacrifice is the price he has to pay to live by his deeply held spiritual values and he remains highly optimistic and confident that “his Creator” will not let him down.

During the period of this research, MIKP also had an unpleasant task of firing his long-trusted Company Secretary of many years for unethical accounting fraud. This was a difficult decision for MIKP because the perpetrator was also a long-trusted employee. During this time, MIKP displayed raw emotion as he was torn between having to do the right thing and report the matter to the police, as despite his call of moral duty, he was deeply concerned for her well-being if the matter was pursued legally. At the time, he was trying to resolve the matter out of the legal courts when the offender agreed to pay the amount she had embezzled from the firm. It goes to show that his kindness and trust can be abused by others, but again when questioned about the matter he says, there is a Divine Accounting system that can never be fooled and everyone will be accountable for their own deeds or misdeeds in the Creator's balance sheet. However despite this unpleasant event that caused him much grief, MIKP remains adamant that it is not his responsibility to judge others. He continues to sign blank cheques. He says,

“Staff, like children, learn from what you do, not what you say. I believe if I'm honest and truthful, they won't let me down. I find that if I felt a good chemistry with someone from day one, generally I tend to be accurate with my judgement. I believe that comes from my own spiritual values. I am certain I have achieved this level of success in my life due to my strong foundation of spiritual values which takes years, even generations to build - such a strong value system. If it's eroding in the present generation, we are to blame! The leader is important. No two ways about it...A friend of mine sacked his financial controller who worked for him for 22 years. He told me you have to be ruthless in business. I disagree with him. Managing with my heart is both my strength and my weakness... I continue to sign crossed blank cheques because I trust my Financial Manager. That is my level of trust in her. I know she comes from a simple family with strong good values”.

So despite being betrayed by a trusted Company Secretary and the agonising decision whether or not to prosecute her through the legal system for fraud, MIKP continues to live by his philosophy of trusting others at work, as the narration above depicts. His values are strong and unshakeable even when it is continuously tested on various occasions by other stakeholders who are unethical or corrupt in the system. It does not seem to dent his belief and trust in the human

spirit. He says as a leader he needs to lead by example and walk the talk as employees are constantly watching and learning through what a leader does rather than what he says.

6.3.1.3 Case Study M1-Narratives from M1KPs family members

M1KP's wife, sister, and adopted grand-daughter provided narratives about him. The information gathered provided historical data as well as current data on this key participant.

a) Influence of birth parents

Various narratives from M1KP and his family members indicate that he was deeply influenced by his birth family's entrepreneurship spirit which has largely shaped his own interest to venture into business as a vocation. Also, M1KP's father was a local philanthropist who was very community-spirited and made donations to educational causes. These traits are strongly reflected in M1KP. His parents were religious and sent him for religious education from a young age right through his college years. It explains his own deeply held Islamic faith.

b) Early mistakes and difficult past family relationships

His first marriage failed partly because of his frequent and long absence due to business related travels. His neglect and absence led to a difficult relationship with his ex-wife. He also admitted to having an estranged relationship with his son from his first marriage as they had difference of opinions on what it means to be a good Muslim. His now adult son, whom he thinks was influenced by deviationist teachings of Islam, disagreed with M1KP's own life values. It goes to show that a person who may be spiritual is not spared from having to navigate difficult relationships in their personal lives. There is often a false notion that spiritually inclined souls have noble straightforward or "nice and smooth" lives free of controversies or conflict. This admission by M1KP proves that one evolves spiritually in life and like everyone else, learns through mistakes and experiences of life and does better when they know better. It highlights that

being spiritual or religious does not exclude one from difficulties or troubles in life. It does however show that M1KP with his spiritual inclinations took stock of his personal experiences and built a strong character and value-system which makes him resilient and formidable even in the face of adversity. The M1 case-study exemplifies how spiritually inspired individuals display strong resilience for facing all kinds of difficulty and act with integrity placing their hopes and faith in the hands of a divine higher power. As M1KP boldly prints in his company brochure “Complete faith in our Creator gives me all that I want through my prayers”. For this participant this perception is held as a deep truth and reality that guides all aspects of his life.

c) Supportive family circumstances

Despite a difficult past, some of the remarkable family circumstances of M1KP include the fact that his second marriage was to a lady of Hindu faith, who converted to Islam, adopting a Muslim name. His wife is a medical doctor with whom he is happily married for more than 20 years. She however does not don the Muslim attire, particularly the headscarf. Instead, she often accompanies her husband for formal events wearing her traditional sari (traditional attire of Indian women). This despite the fact that M1KP is a renowned and prominent leader in the larger community, and he himself is hardly ever seen in public without his traditional Muslim attire. The question of attire may appear to be an insignificant superficial surface level innuendo, but in the Malaysian cultural context, those who convert to Islam by marriage face enormous pressure to adopt Islamic ways, including the wearing of Islamic attire. In this respect, M1KP’s wife continues to defy norm as he himself holds a highly philosophical view on the matter. He confides that wearing a head-scarf is a personal prerogative of the Muslim woman and he firmly supports his wife whom he says has the freedom to decide when or if she wishes to ever don the formal Muslim attire. He also never fails to acknowledge her support in his life in many of his public speeches and does not shy away from bringing her to official Muslim events. This simple

issue of supporting his wife's values in public is a mark of a man of integrity who does not bend his personal values for the sake of public relations or convenience which is common especially for an active public personality like himself.

d) Respect of other religious traditions

Beyond this fact, this couple had become affectionately fond of a former nurse who used to work at M1KP's wife's medical clinic. This nurse was treated as if she was a close family member and when she had a child, M1KP and his wife officially adopted the child as their grandchild since birth. The child knows this couple as her grandparents and lives with them five days a week and returns to her parents during school holidays. M1KP funds her private education and is emotionally very fond of this child who is now in high school. He interrupts the interview several times to take her incessant loving phone-calls indicating his attachment to his grandchild. The remarkable story about this is that the nurse is a Catholic, and his adopted grand-daughter continue to observe this religion, attending church every Sunday, despite living in M1KP's Muslim household. This is an uncommon occurrence of deep mutual respect and acceptance of religious and cultural differences of one another which is characterised by M1KP with his inclusive nature accepting the practice of faiths other than his own Muslim background. M1KP's own past experience of having a kind Hindu lady raise him as a Muslim when he was in need may explain his love and humility towards others of different faiths. M1KP's spirit of Islamic brotherhood he wears on his sleeve, to the extent of even addressing the researcher in sisterly endearment.

e) M1KP's relationship to researcher

This participant, who makes regular business trips to Australia, has met the researcher in Australia on three different trips. Although he is used to business class travel and five star accommodations, on his last trip, he opted to stay at the humble residence of the researcher for

five days in July 2011. Bringing his wife and grand-daughter along on this trip, it provided the researcher with a rare opportunity to get to know the key participant from very close proximity, as a guest within her own home. The relationship with this participant, starting as total strangers over three years ago, has transformed into a comfortable and familiar relationship as the researcher is treated as a member of his extended family. This snap-shot of M1KP's family ties and values inform the researcher of his loving ways and his deep integrity in respecting individual family members (even if they had differing religious values to himself) which he practices at home. The researcher would learn that in his office, even his staff would address him as "brother" in non-formal circumstances. His loving affectionate demeanour is consistently seen even at the workplace as described in the next section.

6.3.1.4 Case Study M1 – Narratives from co-workers (CWs)

This section provides narratives from staff members who work at M1KP's office.

6.3.1.4a Narrative with CW1

The first interview was held with M1KP's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – M1CW1. This participant had worked for M1KP for five years at the time of the interview. Her position was unique in that she was also the younger sister of M1KP. She explained that her relationship with M1KP at the office was initially on a tricky terrain as she could not distinguish when he was communicating to her as her brother or when he was being her boss. They eventually set ground rules to ensure that "family" related issues are not discussed in the office and so, it was strictly business at work. From the research point of view however, she was able to provide valuable background information being closely related to the key participant. M1CW1 describes M1KP as someone who is deeply spiritual from a relatively young age. She puts it down to his strong religious upbringing and to the many character-forming difficulties he had undergone including several life-threatening circumstances which were turning points in his life. This she says has led

him to become more loving, caring and calmer as a person, when she clearly remembers him to be a lot more temperamental prior to those significant events in his life. Some of his hardships include periods when he was out of work and was dependent on his wife's earnings. She says he is resilient and rebuilt his life through hard work and God's grace.

a) Conflict of M1KP's spiritual philosophy with business rationale

M1CW1 explains that M1KP has a spiritual philosophy that if a person was to earn \$10 at least \$2 must be given back to society. That goodwill he believes will invite heartfelt blessings and prayers from those he has helped – such is the cyclic nature of life that it will ensure what he gives out will return to him in multi-folds, whether in protecting his own well-being or ensure his success. M1CW1 reveals that M1KP's charitable nature had gotten slightly out of hand as now they have strangers (some genuine, others not) who constantly turn up at their office asking for donations for small and big causes.

As a CEO of the company, she sees this development as becoming problematic especially in recent times as they had scaled down their business operations and no longer have mega-projects to fund charitable causes as they used to in the past. However, M1KP's charitable influence has not correspondingly reduced. From their firm's financial standpoint, they do not have the extensive funds to support all of his charitable causes. She complains that M1KP's nature was similar to that of their late-father who was community-minded and generous to a fault when it came to helping the needy.

“He has to learn to say “No”. He attends a lot of social functions where he makes commitments here and there to help those who approach him at these functions. Because he cannot say “No”, people even seek him out at weddings and other events to request donations. I worry for his well-being for the future. He works long hours, travels interstate frequently for his charitable causes, and works through weekends and is always exhausted. He is in the office early and then in the evenings he is busy with social

engagements. He is frequently invited to officiate various events, especially at schools and mosques.”

These incidences cited above by M1CW1 clearly identify the pitfalls that can occur to a spiritually inclined business leader if he allows his social causes overtake his business rationale. In M1KP’s case he seems to rely on trusted staff to turn down request for charity when he himself is unable to say “No” when he needs to.

b) Impact of M1KP’s spiritual values on M1CW1

Despite admitting that maintaining a profitable business with a fairly large outflow of funds for charitable causes is difficult from a business standpoint, M1CW1 still strongly believes in the spiritual philosophy held by M1KP, declaring that:

“If one helps others; ones’ own needs would be provided for by the Almighty.”

She says that M1KP was a walking example in her life of this truth and he has shaped her own work and personal values to a large extent. She deeply appreciates and understands M1KP’s work ethic and values and has seen him in action especially in meetings with staff and clients. She has observed how he integrates his spiritual values in everything that he does and is not afraid to live by his values. When asked how staff respond to his spiritual practices in the office, she says:

“Malaysians are generally open-minded and they are not offended if M1KP quotes from the Quran before starting a meeting for instance...because across the board when you compare, one religion to the next, there are so many similarities in the teachings and practices. I personally feel that most religions don’t differ much in their essence. Also as Malaysians our culture is such we are so exposed to so many differing cultural and religious traditions, so we are used to religious or spiritual values other than our own.”

This participant believes that the high tolerance for religious or spiritual practices and values in the office by people of differing faiths is a cultural phenomenon unique to Malaysia where exposure to differing value-systems of all the faiths practiced in Malaysia, makes

Malaysians generally open-minded. This section also highlights that even when M1CW1 disagrees with the financial implications of M1KP's charitable business practices, she however finds inspiration in and role-models after M1KP, appreciating that his spiritual philosophy which he integrates in all his work situations seem to "pay off" in different ways, such as his overall well-being and prosperity.

c) Responding to corrupt business climate

In recent times with the changing political leadership in the country, M1CW1 acknowledged that the local business environment, especially in acquiring government-projects has become increasingly corrupt. Hence, in order to secure projects, one has to be well-connected politically and firms such as their own are pressured to pay bribes in order to secure government projects.

"Personally this is sickening. Having to pay bribes conflicts with our deep values but there is no choice as there are many others willing to do so, so you either have to play the game or you are not in the game."

Due to this ethical dilemma, M1KP has down-sized his business considerably and is moving into other ventures where he can avoid corrupt business environments, planning to diversify into manufacturing or IT consultancy as a long-term strategy for his firm;

"From about 30 to 40 staff members in the past we now have about 10. Some of our ex-staff return to work as part-time consultants on project to project basis depending on our needs".

M1KP had encouraged M1CW1 who has young children to migrate out of the country as he feels the younger generation do not stand a fair chance to do well in this country.

"Two years ago he told me and my husband that for the sake of our kids' future, we should consider migrating. We are thinking about it".

M1CW1 cites a recent incident when her star-performing daughter did not get a placement in a residential school (reserved for “Bumiputera” status students of Muslim faith), she appealed to the officials at the Education Ministry, and she was told that although she was Muslim, at least one parent of the child had to be of Malay descent. The corrupt business climate and discriminatory political policies in Malaysia present all kinds of difficulties for business leaders but especially for those like M1KP who have strong spiritual and ethical values which clearly conflicts with the corrupt values rampant in the local business climate. However, having a firm spiritual conviction gives M1KP great strength in making personal sacrifices such as when having to downsize his business, showing resilience to re-strategize future plans to diversify his business focus and venturing into business opportunities that are less prone to corrupt practices.

Being a community leader and educational activist his option to become a member of the opposition party, further reduces his prospect of acquiring government projects managed and disbursed through government tenders. His disappointment with the state of affairs in the country leads him to advice his sister to migrate. These are all indications of how a leader with a strong spiritual grounding is steadfast in the face of conflicts and challenges and is often creative and innovative and ever willing and ready to make required changes and when a situation calls for it, even make deep personal sacrifices as gleaned from M1CW1’s narrative on M1KP.

6.3.1.4b Narrative with M1CW2

The next participant interviewed in Case-study M1 was a senior Advisor of Human Resources and Finance for Project Management (M1CW2). This individual, who was in his early 60s, was also Muslim by faith and feels his long association with M1KP, working in this firm for about 16 years, is mainly because they shared compatible values, not only as Muslims, but universal values. This participant had many years of working experience in multinational firms prior to joining M1KP’s firm, where he had for many years cultivated meticulous, calculative and

highly competitive business values which he brings to this small business environment, which he says is more flexible. In the large multi-national corporations (MNCs) where he previously worked, values are pre-determined and factored by the key performance indicators and may not necessarily consider or are not very open or accommodating towards personal values of individuals. As an example, M1CW2 cites that:

“I used to work for a Japanese MNC. As a Muslim I had to go for my prayers at certain times and they didn’t appreciate that and if there was a company cocktail party, they served “non-halal” food that I could not partake, and then there were social events involving social-escorts like the geisha girls, which was against my Muslim values, so I used to avoid those social events being a family man. It was a cultural conflict. However, working with MIKP our values are similar and so 95% of the time there is great acceptance of each other’s decisions and opinions at work. There are no problems at all.”

This highlights the fact when the individuals experienced value-conflict at work, they often respond by withdrawing from company events and M1CW2 highlights when there is greater value congruence between the leader and his workers, there is less room for conflict to occur.

a) Key value at work –Trust

When it comes to the most important value, M1CW2 believes it is about being truthful which he says promotes trust. According to M1CW2,

“Trust is built upon familiarity with a person’s trustworthiness over time. If a person walks the talk and consistently puts in an honest day’s work for his pay, then one can tell if you can trust an individual or not. I believe that all the good values such as honesty and integrity can be hard to measure or quantify, but a good yardstick I find is that a person who is religious or spiritual tend to have good values. Doesn’t matter if they are Muslim, Buddhist, Christian or any other religion, our faith may not necessarily be compatible with one another, yet it’s the best guarantee that a person of faith generally has good universal values.”

This participant reiterates M1KP being a man of faith, indicates to a fair extent his good values, and therefore the ability to trust such a leader, even in conflict situation is enhanced. M1CW2 says:

“I have a sense of well-being in this firm and sometimes if I disagreed with M1KP I will voice my opinions. I think it’s a question of trust. I know in this firm there is a clear focus on giving back to society and I cherish this value of working for a leader who is a good corporate citizen whom I can trust.”

This narrative from M1CW2 suggest that co-workers appreciate a leader who has a religious or spiritual mooring as they are likely to have good values at work and can be trusted.

b)Erosion of values in the business environment

Having hinted on the business climate in Malaysia, M1CW2 also alludes to the fact that it was easier to trust the older generation.

“They were driven and motivated and when given responsibility they delivered, but there has been erosion of values in the (business) environment.”

M1CW2 laments that the current business climate in Malaysia itself is lacking in value. He says it is reflected in all spheres, in the political system, civil service, judiciary where;

“...the whole fabric of moral values is fractured.”

M1CW2 reiterates, in such an un-conducive environment, the leader of an organisation becomes extremely important in navigating the realities of the business environment, without compromising on his deeply held values, which he acknowledges is a huge challenge for any leader.

6.3.1.4c Narrative with M1CW3

This participant has worked as the Finance and Administration Manager (M1CW3) at M1KP’s firm for 10 years. Being Hindu, she was the only one of two non-Muslim office members and was asked if it posed any issues for her..To this M1CW3 says:

“I feel I am treated better here, than in my former work place. The Muslim way of greeting is different. ‘Assalamuallaikum’ translated to mean ‘Peace be upon you’, to our usual ‘Good morning’, or ‘good evening’, and in the first few days I felt awkward so I clarified with M1KP if I needed to conform to the Muslim greeting and he said I can greet people as in my usual non-muslim greeting.”

She explains, this being a Muslim enterprise, many mistake her for a Muslim especially when she takes telephone calls with stake-holders of the firm who simply assume she must be Muslim too.

“I feel a sense of connection with the boss and the rest of staff members here. I knew M1KP for many years prior because he was a good friend of my former boss. People used to tell me how kind he is and after coming to work for him I can confirm that all I heard was true of him. He is kind, cares for other people regardless of race, religion or age. He loves children. He treats me like a sister. When not in formal situations, I address him as “brother”. I also know his family members. He used to visit my family for special occasions like Diwali (Hindu festival of lights). For my birthday, he and his wife take me out for dinner. In the office, we celebrate the occasion.”

As for her boss M1CW3 describes M1KP as someone who allows his staff to work independently, and believes and trust in them. Because of his trust and appreciation she states;

“I feel I can’t take advantage of his kindness and it motivates me to be proactive to get things done without being told. I don’t want to let him down. He always shows concern and care for others and we all know that random people, very poor people receive donations from him.”

a) Mutual trust and family like atmosphere at work

M1CW3 says watching M1KPs considerate and polite ways; staff members generally also behave in very respectful ways towards one another. Also he treats people fairly and equally. M1CW3 says M1KP’s influence on her has been to become more caring towards others and to be appreciative of other people’s problems and issues. According to M1CW3, no background checks are made on people who ask for donations, but instead, M1KP relies on skilful caution of his

trusted staff to decide who may be deserving, to filter the genuine from the non-genuine request for donations.

6.3.1.4d Narrative with M1CW4

This participant who used to work for a German firm in Kuala Lumpur was working as a Project Secretary in a temporary position for three months, reporting directly to the Human Resource and Finance Advisor. M1CW4's job is mainly secretarial, assisting with correspondence, travel and clerical work and dealing mainly with contractors and sub-contractors working on the firm's current projects. Being fairly new to the firm, M1CW4 was able to share her first impressions and feelings as a newcomer to the firm.

“When I first came, I realised I had to adjust to an Islamic work environment and was a bit nervous, but they have been so far very nice and caring towards me. I am glad for this opportunity. My direct boss who is a Project Engineer at the project site is very nice to me and shows concern asking me always about my plans to study. I was re-trenched from my former place of work due to the financial crisis. So even though, this is a temporary opportunity, I grabbed it. Both my direct boss and M1KP are both very caring. This being a small organisation, there is a family-like environment, whereas in my former place of employment, a much larger organisation, the bosses didn't even know my name. I am so touched when M1KP shows concern, never failing to greet me and asking if I was well..When I was sick, he would ask how I feel and offered for his wife who is a doctor to speak to me to advice on health and diet matters. I plan to study further and am also looking for a better opportunity because I had to take a big pay-cut when I came here but I definitely will recommend any of my friends who are looking for a job to work here.”

a) M1KP's Influence on M1CW4

This participant is clear that she would not stay on to work in this organisation after her three month contract ends, for personal reasons. Mainly because being ambitious, and having set her sights on working for a large corporation she wants to develop her career towards her personal vision. Despite enjoying her present work environment she does not believe there are

sufficient opportunities or scope within M1KP's firm, for her to enhance her career goals. She has already had several other offers but is taking her time to find one that suits her..

“M1KP is a very nice person, and although I've been here only for a few short months, I have seen so many people who have come here to ask for help. There are files and files in here showing how many people he has helped in the past. When I see my boss is so charitable, his contribution to society is so inspiring and I am so impressed. He also doesn't discriminate between the races. He helps people from all walks of life. He is a very kind man. I trust him a 100%. I remember him saying that those who pray can be trusted and I trust his words. In my previous organisation, we never talk about anything else other than sales. But here we not only speak about issues concerning humanity but there is so much of effort towards helping those who need help in society and consider our duties beyond the workplace and so I feel very fortunate, and in fact if I wasn't so ambitious, I would choose to work here for the long term. It has inspired me to offer more of my time and money to help the less fortunate too. I now volunteer at the local orphanages but what I do does not compare to what M1KP does. I would recommend any of my friends and family to work for M1KP.”

From M1CW4's account it is clear she is in admiration of M1KP for his kind and charitable ways, suggesting that she did not think that there were many people like M1KP who does so much beyond the regular call of duty. She shared that even when she had other job offers, she did not feel worried to discuss her employment options with M1KP himself, because she knows he has her best interest at heart and she trust him enough to discuss her career plans for the future. M1CW4 says despite her casual position, a mutual trust exist between her employer and her and she feels fortunate she is treated so well considering that in many other places casual or temporary staff are considered expendable and are neither noticed nor appreciated.

6.3.2 Data Interpretation of Case Study M1

6.3.2.1 Analysis of self-disclosure of key participant

The background summarising M1KP's key achievements and life experiences provides a backdrop that allows one to understand some of the value forming events in his life. The story he

recalled and shared in his narrative provides the researcher with a useful framework to formulate a more composite image of the personality he displays. It helps the researcher rationalise and understand the personality, from both a personal and professional standpoint. It appears that traumatic and difficult life-changing moments of the past as depicted in M1KP's narration, plays a huge role in forming his internal mental models. These significant events shape and provide the lenses for not merely self-perception but also general perception, behaviour and action in and of the world. In Chapter Four this participant's strong religious background and spiritual aspirations were clearly established. Through the participant's own story-telling, the choice he makes to disclose some key events from the immeasurable life events he must have had indicates the basis of his chosen stories is that they were meaningfully significant for himself. The narratives provided by the participant according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) are retrospective meaning-making which also expresses emotions, thoughts and interpretations of the narrator. An important aspect of these participants is that as leaders in a business organisation every thought, emotion and action generated by these leaders has an impact on their engagements in the world of work and business.

The researcher has the difficult task of sieving through all these data to discover relevant meaning that is significant to answer the specific RQs in this study. So, whilst many stories are shared and learnt during the field-work process, the researcher has the crucial task of cherry-picking only those which are relevant to her study. In this section, the background learnt from the M1KP through his self-reflection provides a snapshot of his internal workings of his mind. This process that involves analysing the contents of his own mind, held in his memory is mostly unconscious for the participant, until it is probed and brought to the conscious mind through his own efforts at self-reflection and through the process of questioning, recalling and narrating from memory during this interview process. In the most recent interaction with M1KP, he revealed that

he found the entire research process and the relationship with the researcher clarified a lot of his own feelings and reflections as he was forced to think about some of his own belief systems which he would not have necessarily probed deeply into, if not for the purpose of this research. It highlights also that this subject of spirituality is often simply taken for granted to exist but rarely consciously contemplated upon by many.

Often these are stories that are told over and over again in many different circumstances because they have deeply influenced or affected the participant. This was evident in M1KP as it was observed that the stories he had related to the researcher in the past were repeatedly mentioned at various moments for example, at a formal function and at many other occasions when the researcher noted M1KP repeating the same stories to others. Those defining stories and images (real or perceived) retained in the memory over time, become entrenched mental models. In the case of M1KP, his strong adherence to religious principles is supported by Hicks (2002) as a form of spiritual characterisation that allows the individual through religious prayer to consistently self-reflect. The spiritual process of self-reflection in many traditions either through meditation or prayer is clearly aimed at first bringing these deep-seated mental models to surface with an aim to understand one's own personality and nature. Mental models according to Senge (2000) are deeply held internal images of how the world works and affects what we see and shapes our perceptions. From a spiritual stand-point, those who engage in self-reflection are constantly bringing their mental models to surface, testing, questioning and improving on these internal images. Such people are clearly more self-aware and have greater clarity of purpose and vision. These stories disclosed by M1KP are a clear indication of some of his deeply held mental models. Whether these mental models serve his success in the business world is what the case-study in this chapter seeks to establish. This is done by analysing the personality of M1KP from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders and relevant others.

6.3.2.2 Analysis of family narratives

The narratives and close observation of the dynamics between M1KP's close family members and himself provides the researcher with a close view of the key participant in his private life, away from his professional role and the office environment. As all people are prone to wear a private and public mask, often times it is close family members who can provide insight into the "unmasked" personality. Here, the researcher had the opportunity to interact closely with the key participant's close family members and towards the end of this research process, she had become quite familiar with M1KP and his family members and in true Islamic spirit of brotherhood, the researcher was made to feel like a member of M1KP's extended family. The researcher was endearingly referred to by M1KP and his family as a sister (among the adults) and aunty (to his grandchild). The use of the relational family terminologies is quite common within the Asian cultural context, where total strangers refer to one another as "sister/brother, aunty/uncle, ma/pa etc. when addressing others as a mark of respect for age differences of those elder or simply as a sign of endearment. This mark of respect is ever-present within close and extended families and outside of this boundary; it is not uncommon for strangers such as traders and retailers in the marketplace to refer to their customers using similar endearing terminologies. In more formal circumstances, such as during professional engagements and interactions, the prefix equivalent to "Sir" or "Madam" is almost always added to the name of an individual when addressing one another. Rarely, if ever, one is addressed by ones' first names unless between peers and close friends.

This cultural nuance is quite uniquely Malaysian and present also in other Asian countries as directly experienced by the researcher during her several Asian travels beyond and unrelated to the scope of her research. The significance of this cultural convention is that the unique customs of a nation reflects the underlying value-systems of a particular society. Thus, culture has a strong

hold and connection on prevailing values of any given society. The observation of religious values of the participant's family being subtly but most certainly interwoven in their day to day social customs asserts Beckford's views on religion and social theory where he suggests, whatever else religion is or is not, it is essentially a social phenomenon (2003). The example cited here, on even the way a person is addressed depicts a certain commonality between the culture and values of a society. This tradition reflects the inherited norms and values of the society which provides a clue on how individuals in that given society relate to one another. For this reason, a stranger or visitor may quickly discover and experience the Malaysian culture to be generally friendly, warm and convivial.

6.3.2.3 Analysis of narratives of co-workers

The accounts presented by co-workers on the key participant is an important source of information to check for in discrepancies of perceptions, as an individual's self-perception can be prone to self-deception or possibly over-rated. Thus the information received from individuals who work closely with the key participant provide a vital source of verification on the information received from the first accounts received from the key participants themselves. In M1KP's case, the few key individuals who work with him seem to corroborate the information gathered thus far that his spiritual values seem to be carried through his personal and workplace values, further lending support to the assumption that a spiritually inspired leader brings positive workplace values such as mutual trust, openness, truthfulness, mutual respect, concern and care for one another which all creates a climate of trust and family like culture at the workplace.

The co-workers interviewed appeared to deeply appreciate the leader as a role model for high ethical and moral standards at work and also are inspired themselves to higher performance to please the leader whom they admire. They also appear to be very satisfied with their work environment and have high faith in their leader whom they substantiate as a kind and charitable

person whom they admire. His caring values towards all, regardless of race or creed have inspired some of them to adopt more trusting and charitable values for themselves. This evidently gives strength to the argument that a spiritually inspired leader influences the workplace constructively with positive workplace values that enhance workplace relations, workplace values and overall workplace culture.

6.3.2.4 Analysis of information from casual informants and researcher's own observations

The researcher on one of her visits to Malaysia in July 2009 received an invitation from M1KP to accompany him to travel interstate for an official scholarship awards ceremony for outstanding students, where he was the Guest of Honour. Also accompanied by his wife, the researcher and M1KP travelled chauffer driven to a small town called Bentong in the eastern Malaysian state of Pahang for a full day event. Arriving with M1KP, who was the guest of honour, the researcher by association was given the same VIP treatment, seated with the political dignitaries, state educationist and other dignitaries. The large hall was filled with about a thousand teachers, parents and students. M1KP was invited to officiate the function. He began his speech by paying tribute to his wife who he informed the audience, had supported him through periods of difficulties in his own life, relating stories (the same ones he informed the researcher prior) of his childhood, his difficulties as a student and other interesting anecdotes with the intent to inspire the young students present at the function.

The researcher observed many parents and students came up to M1KP to thank him. They were people who mainly were from the underprivileged class whom M1KP had assisted in the past, either sponsoring school fees, buying school shoes, uniforms, arranging scholarships etc. The atmosphere after the official function was similar to that of eager fans waiting to get an autograph of a famous rock-star. M1KP had a very easy-going approachable demeanour and his charm is apparent as the young and old clamoured to be in his company at this formal event. His

speech was inspirational, emotional and raw, sharing words of wisdom citing universal values. M1KP is also known in local circles to be a man of integrity. He is passionate, outspokenly courageous and therefore highly respected for his socio-political activism. This was fairly obvious as he mingled with the people at the official function, comfortable in rubbing shoulders with the top brass who were in attendance and equally so when speaking to young school children and their parents who were of humble backgrounds. His ability to stride the two worlds of the rich and famous and the poor and down-trodden makes him uniquely amiable to people of all walks of life.

To display some of his personality traits a scrutiny into an excerpt of a speech (see Figure 6.2, Section 6.3.1.2(e)) he had written and presented at a political rally provides a glimpse into his patriotism and his care and concern for those he represents. The tone and content of this excerpt demonstrates some of the above-mentioned personality traits of M1KP. His open reference to “God” and also religious and moral values indicates he integrates his religious and spiritual value systems in all his endeavours, be it personal, professional and even in his socio-political engagements beyond his business roles.

6.3.2.5 Analysis of symbolism in physical space

The office environment was simple and organised, a fairly small rented space of an office block. At the entrance, there was a doorbell, and an intercom system, to allow visitors in, presumably installed to cope with the many random walk-ins seeking for help or donations. In the meeting room, the walls were adorned with pictures of M1KP and various Malaysian and international dignitaries. Prominent figures such as the pictures with the former Prime Ministers of Malaysia, also the former President of India, Abdul Kalam. Also various Awards and memorabilia and newspaper reports on various major projects M1KP’s firm had handled in the past. Within the office was also a “Surau” or Muslim prayer room and during the researcher’s

visit on numerous occasions she witnessed M1KP and other Muslim staff use this room during their prayer time. There was also a small pantry and the cleaning lady who was affectionately called “aunty” in local Malay language was going about with her cleaning duties. More Awards hang in M1KP’s room with photos of family on his large imposing table. These physical symbolisms’ not just depict M1KP’s social status and public profile but also represent the accomplishments of the key participant depicting also some of his personal treasures, including framed pictures of his family and loved ones. The physical symbols in the office contextualise the tacit dimensions of values that are in use at the workplace symbolised through artefacts and arrangement of physical structures, which provide subtle but important cues on work space relationships and workplace values.

6.3.3 Case Study M2: Company and key participant profile

The second case-study (M2) in Malaysia was conducted with the Managing Director (who is referred to as M2KP) of a landscaping firm which specialises in all types of landscape design and construction works. This firm was incorporated in 1996 by the key participant in partnership with her husband. Neither had any formal background in agriculture or design but shared a common interest and recognized the importance of preserving the environment and nature. The firm has two large nurseries of several acres located interstate where the plants for their business are cultivated. The first nursery was established in 1996 specialising in garden plants and the second specialising in aquatic plants was established later in the same year. The firm is a pioneer in aquatic plant cultivation and sales. The firm has more than 36 varieties of water lilies and lotuses plus numerous other water plants. The aquatic farm, a visual delight was located interstate in a small town called Slim River and the researcher travelled to this location, accompanied by two members of the firm’s employees to view the farm which was one of its kind in Malaysia.

In recognition of this, the firm was granted pioneer industry status by the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA), Ministry of Trade and Industry. The firm participated as a centre piece for the launching of the Malaysian Agricultural, Horticultural and Agro-tourism exposition (MAHA) in 1999. This maiden exhibition was officiated by the then Prime Minister of Malaysia which signalled the recognition and importance of agriculture by the Malaysian government. This company and its directors have been featured in several prominent local daily newspapers and television programs. The company in association with other organisations has done outstanding work in promoting gardening and preservation of nature in Malaysia.

The firm has promoted new concepts such as ‘Organic Gardens’ , ‘Functional Gardens’, ‘Herb Gardens’, and ‘Water Gardens’. The corporate philosophy of the firm reads “*landscaping is a combination of art, form and function, created with awareness of the environment and long term practicality*”. The researcher was informed that the typical Asian value of ‘Feng Shui’ and ‘Vaasthu’ were an important element of the corporate philosophy. Feng Shui is the Chinese art or practice of positioning objects, based on a belief in patterns of yin and yang and the flow of chi that have positive and negative effects. Vaasthu similar to Feng Shui is the ancient Hindu tradition of space design to promote harmony with natural forces. This suggest that these traditional Asian values influenced decisions pertaining to orientation of a design structure and its interaction with the surrounding environment including the local microclimates, the slope of the land, vegetation, soil quality etc. The firm had worked closely with scientist (both local and foreign) from various research organisations and the information and knowledge gained were put to practical use in all their landscaping projects.

For recognition of its outstanding performance, the firm had received several Excellence Awards from various government agencies. The company has established a strong network of consultants and sub-contractors to manage many large projects offering a comprehensive range of

services from initial concept design to on-site implementation and maintenance of landscape projects of all types and scale. The firm has built up a team of professionals, technical and administration staff, giving opportunities to young and energetic graduates from various fields to learn and grow with the company, including architects, engineers, draftsmen, quantity surveyors, supervisors, accounts administration and IT personnel, who work together on hardscape, soft-scape, mechanical and electrical landscaping projects. Hardscape projects covers construction of footpath, pavement, retaining walls, drainage, steps and railings, pump house, irrigation pump rooms, water features and earth works. Soft-scape projects include subsoil drainage, turfing, shrub planting, tree planting and hydro seeding. Mechanical and electrical projects includes manufacturing of lights, cabling for lighting, underwater cabling for underwater lighting, feeder pillars, irrigation systems and pumps as well as other related equipment. The value of contracts undertaken by this firm ranges from small scale projects valued at RM\$7,000 to large projects valued at RM\$3.2 million. The firm employs between 20–40 employees depending on the number of projects being managed at varying times (Company documents, 2009). At the time of the interview, the firm was experiencing a down-turn in projects due to an overall economic downturn in Malaysia.

6.3.3.1. Profile of participants in Malaysian Case Study M2

Table 6.2 in the following page presents the brief profile of participants and casual informants who were interviewed to provide layers of information based on their personal or professional relationship with the second key Malaysian participant (M2KP) of Case-study M2. At the time of the interview a total of five staff worked in the office while a total of seven others worked on site at the location of various projects. The number of staff at the time of interview had been downscaled due to fewer numbers of projects undertaken. However at their peak, the firm may employ up to 30 subcontractors to manage their multiple projects. This includes project

managers, quantity surveyors, landscape architects, project engineers, supervisors and farm workers.

The researcher also spoke with five family members, and also casually mingled with a few friends and maids who were present at a religious ceremony at the home of M2KP when she was invited to participate and witness the ceremony and also meet some close associates of M2KP's all of whom were casually observed by the researcher.

No.	Interviewee	Relationship to Key Informant	Age Range	Gender	Status/ Years Known	Religious or Spiritual Belief
1	M2KP	(Key Participant)	Mid 40s	Female	Married	Hindu
Narrative Interview with Family Members(FM)						
2	M2FM1	Husband	Early 50s	Male	Over 20 years	Hindu
3	M2FM2	Daughter	Teenager	Female	19 years	Hindu
4	M2FM3	Son	Teenager	Male	18 years	Hindu
5	M2FM4	Daughter	Teenager	Female	14 years	Hindu
6	M2FM5	Mother	Early 70s	Female	Over 40 years	Hindu
Narrative Interviews with Co-Workers(CW)						
7	M2CW1	Accounts and Admin Executive	Early 30s	Male	Over 5 years	Hindu
8	M2CW2	Project Coordinator Mechanical	Early 30s	Male	16 years	Hindu
9	M2CW3	Farm Worker	Mid 40's	Male	8 years	Hindu
10	M2CW4	Farm Worker	Late 30's	Male	8 years	Hindu
Observation and Informal Information gathered from other Casual Informants (CI)						
11	M2CI1	Driver	Early 40s	Male	NA	Muslim
12	M2CI2	Friend	Early 40s	Female	NA	Muslim
13	M2CI3	Friend	Early 60s	Male	NA	Hindu
14	M2CI4	Maid	Early 20s	Female	NA	Christian
15	M2CI5	Nephew	Teenager	Male	NA	Hindu

Table 6.2 Profile of participants in Case Study M2

6.3.3.2 Self disclosure of key participant (M2KP)

M2KP is the only female participant interviewed in Malaysia. She is the Managing Director of a landscaping business with landscaping projects covering a range of services from initial concept design and consultancy to on-site implementation and maintenance of landscape projects of various types and scale all around Malaysia. M2KP in her late 40s is married with three children, two of whom are teenagers. She describes her lawyer husband as her business and spiritual partner and also as the inspirational stabilising pillar or rock in her life. M2KP is Hindu and frequently makes spiritual pilgrimages to India visiting holy sites and also is a keen observer of all Hindu religious festivals, rituals and rites.

In her office there is a prayer altar with a lighted lamp and many symbols of her Hindu faith was observed within the premises of her office, such as images of Lord Ganesh and of other Gods and Goddess. One of M2KP's passions is the environment and its preservation, prompting her and her husband to venture into establishing a landscape business in 1996. Her business had grown steadily and she was thrust into the limelight when her firm secured some landmark government projects. In 2004 M2KP became a Council Member and Chairperson of the Woman's Entrepreneur Committee in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and she became a regular on local media, frequently giving talks on environmental preservation. M2KP, who hails from a small town in the northern state of Perak, strongly vouches for the importance of education for the improvement and evolving of lives especially of those from under-privileged societies. For this reason, she is very involved in efforts to upgrade education among children of lower income groups and provides any assistance she can to organisations focussing on the same. Her belief is that education is the way out of poverty for the rural and urban poor. She also confides that she is at a cross-road in her life and is deepening her search to find meaning at work and her larger purpose in life. She is considering to taking her charitable work more seriously and

is planning to put her background in education and English Literature to good use by helping children from very poor communities and the slums learn the English Language.

a) Hindu-based value systems at work

M2KP openly declares that her spiritual beliefs influence her work values.

“My values at work come from my conscience which is tied to my belief in the Divine and so I have a strong spiritual base out of which I make decisions. I have seen how others suffer often after engaging in unethical business practices. I am a believer of the Law of Karma and sometimes things appear like in the movies, bad deeds eventually catch up with individuals. I have chosen to take the more difficult path of righteousness. It comes quite naturally to me. Sometimes I have to put aside my business thinking hat and put humanitarian values ahead of business decisions. It is the Dharmic way. I’ve had to help innocent people who were victims of the harsh world of business.”

For this participant religious values are strongly upheld and religious events are celebrated in her home often inviting all her staff members and close friends and business associates. She is a strong advocate of practicing rites and rituals mainly to educate her own three children on their cultural heritage. She insists that because of that all her children too seem to have grown to be spiritually inclined. This was further corroborated in narratives obtained from family members.

b) Dealing with the corrupt business environment

This participant has firm faith in the words of a Guru she learns from who advised her to stand detached and not to engage in “the drama” of life but instead to be a witness and just watch others and choose to respond according to the situation with clarity and conviction instead of simply reacting to all kinds of negativity in the business environment. For example she states:

“I do not usually react to a situation with my mind. I am often able to observe my own ego reactions to various situations. This spiritual lesson has helped me handle many difficult situations such as when dealing with difficult clients, suppliers and my ability to react calmly in those situations eventually pay off. I know others in my business who react with stormy-minds often end up in legal complications...But leading a spiritual life does not

mean everything will remain calm and serene in your life. On the contrary, when you hold on to spiritual values and engage in the world of business, you are bound to experience all kinds of problems, and I need to be a catalyst to right some wrongs that occur and champion humanitarian causes alongside business-goals.” (See Appendix 6.3.3.2 for full excerpt)

Here M2KP clearly alludes to how the corrupt business environment involves a treacherous terrain which needs to be navigated with caution as many in her industry resort to unethical practices to gain huge profits at the expense of sometimes utilising public funds, to produce poor quality products and services (see Appendix 6.3.3.2 for more details). M2KP confides that at times it becomes difficult to continue with her value system as often despite her kind and good effort, she rarely ever experienced gratitude, despite helping so many. She says her tendency to put humanitarian values before purely rational business decisions has sometimes come back to bite her.

As an example, she quotes this incident when she provided a business associate with start-up capital for a soft-landscape project and helped him secure a big project and later she discovered that this person was not disciplined in paying suppliers on time and was a gambler and when his wife came crying to her office she still felt compelled to help. She has not heard from them since, even though she had gone out of her way to help them. However, she says it doesn't stop her from doing what she believes to be the right based on her personal values – and that is to help others where possible. She puts down her attitude to her acquired karma (the Hindu law of cause and effect). She says she is never one to question her fate too much. She says

“Throughout my life, I've never ever asked ‘God, Why me?’ I realise that all that is in my experience in this life-time is my own ‘samskara’”.

She explains this term as a Hindu philosophy of the natural cycle of birth, death and rebirth as a fact of nature influenced by the law of Karma. Thus it is believed that deeds in past life determine the experience of the present life. She continues:

“So my conscience is clear that I am in fact responsible for events in my own life based on the ‘samskara’ of my soul. Thus part of my life experience is to meet the nasty as well as the good. I know that I am the architect of my own fortunes and misfortunes so at all times I am trying to see the good even in the bad occurrences in my life. This means I have to engage fully in all that happens in life. So for example, like today I have to deal with this thug who is yelling abuses at us at the front door of our office. He was sent by some business opponents who resort to such lowly acts using bullying and scare tactics to do business. In such circumstances, I always rely on my spiritual strength to assess the situation and not react hastily based on ego reaction...For instance, today, I had to first protect my staff by calling for a lock-down, then I took a moment to say a prayer, then I called the police to deal with the rogue and also informed my husband as a back-up plan.”

This drama she is relating co-incidentally occurred as the researcher was within the office premise when a violent rogue began screaming foul abuses and banging and shaking down the front door of the office. The researcher observed M2KP as she calmly first went to her own office where she keeps a prayer altar (where she presumably said a prayer) and then steadily went to talk sense with the trouble-maker through the intercom and locked doors. However, he was reprehensible and continued on his tirade until the police arrived minutes later and carted him away.

For the researcher, it was a bit unnerving to experience such an unforeseen, adrenalin charged incident, first-hand. M2KP later explained that the day’s event was not uncommon and that it was part and parcel of dealing in a business environment that is becoming more and more corrupt, and unpredictable even to the extreme of having to deal with gangsters similar to the event of that day. She was naturally disappointed with what was happening in her work environment and confides that it hurts her feelings and that she has a vision to soon move away from the dishonest culprits who make it difficult for her and others like her who try to earn an honest living.

c) Future-business vision

Partly due to the fact that the current business climate conflicts with her personal values M2KP is already plotting her next business goals. She says she is ready to switch careers easily as she had done before when she moved from teaching into the landscaping business with zero knowledge of the industry and has succeeded beyond her wildest expectations. She says now she is at a cross-road again. She has considered going into the health spa, wellness market specialising in Ayurveda (an ancient Indian healing system). She is considering setting up a treatment spa at her current nursery farm in Slim River, an hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur. She reiterates her faith in the divine by the following statement.

“Everything comes from the divine Creator, and so I always have an open mind to new possibilities. What I have learnt in this business was all taught to me by some great people who all had a strong divine energy in them. I have learnt from my mentors and now do the same with my own staff, teaching them all that I know. In fact I am grooming M2CW, (her accounts and administration executive) to take over this firm once I leave. I have the ability to move on quite easily from my current to the next project in life because when you are spiritual you learn not to become too attached to materials possessions, fame and name in life.”

Her detached attitude clearly is rooted to her spiritual values that she claims has taught her the Law of detachment. It allows her to share her expertise and skills with her employees without any fear of loss of proprietary knowledge. It speaks of the resilience of spiritually-inspired leaders to remain focussed on the task at hand despite all sorts of difficulties. Their acceptance of all occurrences, good and bad, with a sense of detached involvement allows them to move on to new projects in their lives without undue stress caused by over-attachment to accumulated name, fame or loss of status.

d) Future personal purpose and meaning

M2KP also has a life purpose beyond her business commitment, now that her children are all poised to finish high school and leave home soon. She strongly feels she has a lot in her to contribute to society. Here she elaborates on her life purpose for the future.

“I have a vision for myself. Business-wise I have achieved all that I would like to achieve and there is nothing more that I want anymore. Financially we are comfortable. We have invested wisely and we try not to spend unnecessarily and have learnt to live within our means. I would like to lead a quieter life. I want more time to travel especially to make some spiritual pilgrimages. I also want to concentrate on more social causes, for example, teach English in the orphanages. I’d like to teach basic life skills such as grooming and how to develop confidence in self..I also want to go to India, where I would like to motivate the school kids on the teachings found in our age-old scriptures in ‘ThiruAnamalai’(This is a municipality in the state of Tamil Nadu in India long associated with many yogis who are practitioners of yoga who have achieved a high level of spiritual insight, such as the famous ‘Ramana Maharishi’, a renowned deceased Hindu guru, who lived in ‘Mount Arunachala’, now a famous spiritual tourism destination.”

She says she finds that the state of India despite its great spiritual heritage is sliding backwards because education of long-held values has regressed. This confession by M2KP indicates her commitment to her own spiritual growth as well as in helping others grow spiritually. She confides that she has a deep desire to take up studies in Hindu philosophy. She concludes that there is a reason for everything that appears in one’s mind and she feels compelled to act on her mind’s desires.

e) Father’s influence on her own values

M2KP says although her friends and family tell her its wrong for her to mix her humanitarian values in business but she says she continues to live by her own personal values and receives inner gratification for living by her own set value standards. She says:

“My first guru was my father. He was a Post-Master. During his days everything was done manually and he used to handle a lot of cash, counting manually to balance out the accounts. He was a highly ethical human being and he taught us never to lie or cheat. Growing up with those values taught by our father, my sisters and I have carried forth the same ‘dharmic’ (she explains ‘dharmic’ values as the essential quality or character that is in harmony with the Supreme Cosmos) taught by our dad. I am thankful to him for that and ever since I have patterned my own life values based on what I had grasped from him.”

M2KP continues to hold close to heart the lessons she learnt from her father, and reiterating the importance of a good and respected role-model in one’s life has a huge impact in inculcating strong enduring values in a person’s life.

f) Role of Religious and Cultural Values

M2KP relates that growing up in a small-town, religious and cultural events were the highlights of her social life.

“We never ever questioned the meaning of religious rites and rituals, such as ‘Deepavali’ (Festival of Lights) or ‘Thaipusam’ (Festival celebrating the Hindu ‘Lord Muruga’) and ‘Ponggal’ (Harvest Festival)”.

She feels strongly about preserving her cultural heritage and goes to great lengths to celebrate the many festivities associated with her Hindu faith. She explains that she does this so as to ensure that her children and the younger generation continue to experience and learn about their rich cultural heritage through the practice of a variety of Hindu traditions, rites and rituals. To prove this point, M2KP invited the researcher to attend the “*Ponggal*” festival that was coincidentally being celebrated at her home with family and friends during one of the researcher’s trips to Kuala Lumpur for field-work and data collection. The data gathered is described in the following section.

6.3.3.3 Case Study M2 – Narratives from family members

On the invitation of M2KP, the researcher arrived early at M2KP's residence in the morning of 14th January 2009, spending an entire day with this key participant, her family, friends and staff members. With a continuous religious Hindu hymn playing in the background, we sat together at their dining table with her husband, three children and a nephew for a traditional vegetarian breakfast. The researcher felt warmly welcomed and enjoyed the sumptuous meal in a relaxed atmosphere. During breakfast, the researcher had the opportunity to candidly interview the family members. Two of M2KP's older children were about to enter University overseas. Her eldest (M2FM2) has an ambition to start a charitable Trust Fund with her mother and plans to work for 'Doctors Without Borders' when she completes her medical degree. Her second child (M2FM3), a son, plans to study Bio-medical science because he wants to find cures for viral ailments. He reckons there will be a great demand for this area of specialisation in the near future due to the many new ailments surfacing due to mutations of microorganisms in a world suffering from stressed bio-ecological systems. M2KP's youngest daughter (M2FM4), just turned fourteen and wants to work with animals. The family joked about how she would not let anyone kill even a mosquito! Her husband (M2FM1) who M2KP had described as a strong spiritual influence in her life was very knowledgeable about the symbolism behind the many rites to be performed for the day, providing a running commentary about the ceremony that occurred mid-morning, facing the rising sun in the sky, in the front lawn of the family's bungalow home.

The highlight of the religious ceremony was boiling of milk till it froths over in an earthen pot on a traditional open coal stove, followed by cooking sweet rice in the boiled milk, while chanting some religious verses. The ceremony was explained by M2KP's husband as an offering of thanks to the elements, the sun, fire, wind, water for their life-giving force, supporting life on

the planet, symbolising nature's abundance. In villages, he said, even the animals, particularly the cows are also blessed and partake in the religious event, as they are recognised as co-inhabitants of mother earth. The ceremony was witnessed and conducted by all in the family, taking turns to stir the rice and participating in a prayer of offering to Lord Surya – the Sun God. M2KP's mother (M2FM5) and all her staff from the office were present to participate in the ritual, adjourning afterwards to another round of delicious vegetarian meal for lunch. The atmosphere was warm and friendly with none of the formalities one would expect of the boss and her workers. The family driver was also invited for lunch. He being of a different faith did not partake in the religious ceremony but was in the background socialising with everyone who was there. It provided the researcher with an intimate view of the hospitality and welcoming spirit that pervaded the home of this participant with an obvious close connection between family members and extended family which included the co-workers and friends as well.

It was interesting to note among the invited guest were a Reiki practitioner and healer as well as a psychic consultant. It hints at the kind of social company M2KP keeps which further fortifies her commitment towards spiritual insight. There was display of warm affection between all present. Her family home was also decorated with a variety of Hindu statues and wall-art and collectibles. The family dog was a much loved animal that caused a momentary stir when he disappeared into the neighbourhood street and the children went in search after him and brought him home safely. The researcher stayed till late evening taking notes of conversations and making observations, talking to the invited guest who all showed keen interest in the research and were all highly encouraging and supportive in providing relevant information. The researcher was requested not to record conversations on the digital recorder so as to not make M2KP's family and friends feel any discomfort, particularly since it was a social gathering and religious ceremony where she wanted all her guests to feel at home and I was introduced as a researcher

studying for my PhD on spirituality in the workplace. Narratives from family and friends were therefore recorded in a note-book and observations made at the ceremony was recalled and recorded as soon as the researcher returned home.

6.3.3.4 Case Study M2 - Narratives from co-workers

This section provides narratives from staff members who work at M2KP's office and at the nursery farm where she cultivates the plants for her landscaping business.

6.3.3.4a Narrative by M2CW1

The key staff in M2KP's office is the Accounts and Administration Executive (M2CW1) who is currently being groomed by M2KP to manage all aspects of her business particularly when she is absent on her many trips overseas either for business or on her many spiritual pilgrimages to India.

"I have learnt a lot from M2KP. Work-wise she taught me how to deal with contractors and sub-contractors to manage our many projects. I have worked in other organisations where I was nothing more than a paid employee. Here, I somehow feel like part of a family, an extended family. M2KP is also highly ethical in her business conduct and expects every one of us to maintain the same level of ethics in our work and business dealings."

In this excerpt, M2CW1 provides evidence of M2KPs earlier disclosure or teaching and sharing her expertise with her staff and maintaining a high level of ethical standards at work.

When I experience difficulties with our suppliers or sub-contractors she would always be available to provide advice and guidance and this motivates me to do my best for a boss who cares so genuinely to teach all that she knows. Her influence in my life is very strong. What she has taught me I have shared and taught others too...For example today, you saw how she handled the gangster yelling abuses downstairs. Even in such a tensed moment, she held her cool calm disposition and reacted to the situation that was most professional. Watching how she manages difficult situations is very inspiring for me, as she has far

more experience and so we feel proud to be working for a competent and ethical boss like her.”

In this account M2CW1 recounts the profound impact on staff as they witness her expert handling of a tense situation in the offices. When M2CW1 was questioned about whether M2KP’s spiritual influence was felt at work he relates;

“I was never religious before. I neither believed in prayer or in the existence of a compassionate God who answers your prayers. However, after coming to work for M2KP, I watched her dedication to her faith, and having a Hindu background myself, she took the liberty to teach me some things about our Hindu teachings. None in my own family had ever taught me anything worthwhile about the Hindu faith as she has. The most important lesson that I have taken from her is that God is within you. It’s obvious to me that it is her faith that sees her through difficult moments in the office. Did you notice that she went to the altar to pray, before confronting the trouble-maker down-stairs, before even ringing the police? Her faith is so strong that it’s clearly her first port of call. Both M2KP and her husband have made me feel proud to work in their office, because they walk the talk. They not only talk about being ethical, I can see they truly are ethical.”

Referring to M2KP’s husband (M2FM1), this staff member informs how M2FM1 always says this phrase

“If you earn one ringgit the wrong way, you’ll end up incurring ten ringgit in pay-back. So earn every ringgit ethically.”

This philosophy according to M2CW1 is not only ingrained in the company’s ethos, but has also become a guiding philosophy in his own life.

“I have noticed that I have emulated some of the lessons from them. I have become more spiritual and have the attitude that ‘Everything happens for a reason’... I used to be very stressed in my former place of employment. Here, although I do so much more than what I used to, I find, I’m less stressed and feel comfortable to discuss anything with M2KP without undue tension. Knowing that she is a very reasonable and caring person, it makes me want to try harder at work to meet her expectations. She trusts me to handle some of the responsibilities that she used to handle on her own. I feel proud that I have earned her trust and it’s important to me to have her trust. It makes me highly committed at work. There are no walls at work. We all feel quite free at work. In fact, all of us at work are

quite close. We are close friends and we even socialise after work hours...We respect M2KP and her husband for their professionalism and competence and mostly for their wisdom. We all have learnt a lot from both of them...These are some examples that I can share with you; there are many more reasons why I feel good and proud to work for M2KP. She is humble and very kind and yet very professional at the same time.” (see Appendix 6.3.3.4a for full excerpt)

This narration from M2CW1 depicts M2KP as a highly compassionate, ethical and professional person at work. The positive influence she has on M2CW1 clearly extends beyond just the professional world of work. He unabashedly adores her for her high ethical values and the positive effect she has had on his personal and professional life.

6.3.3.4b Narrative with M2CW2

The remaining three staff members who were available for interview were contract migrant workers of Indian nationality. One of them (M2CW2) worked in the office and on project-sites. M2CW2 had a diploma level professional qualification in mechanical engineering. He had worked for M2KP for four years, starting out as a farm worker and being promoted to office duties. When M2CW2 was asked to comment on his relationship with M2KP he said,

“M2KP is a different kind of boss from all my previous employers. She is someone who treats all equally regardless of their position or hierarchy in the organisation with the same level of respect..You can tell simply by observing the way she speaks to her staff...I have worked for previous employers who can be quite insulting, especially when dealing with staff lower down the hierarchy. M2KP on the other hand treats me as if I was a member of her own family. In fact we often get invited to participate in her family events and at home she treats us as if we are part of her extended family...I arrived as an ordinary farm-worker, but she noticed my enthusiasm to learn, and she started to encourage me to improve my skills and within a few months she promoted me to be a Supervisor. I find the work quite challenging. Especially at the project-site where I have encountered a lot of difficult people and circumstances. Yet because M2KP has been such a kind and generous employer, I have always strived to resolve work-related matters to the best of my abilities...The thing I love most about my employer is that she trusts her staff....Most of all M2KP is not at all self-centred or concerned only about her business

affairs. She interacts with me showing concern for my own personal goals... Not many business leaders out there are like her. She is a very special person. I believe because she and her family members are so religious, that's why she is so generous, kind and supportive." (see Appendix 6.3.3.4b for full excerpt)

This narrative interview provided by M2CW2 again reiterates the data gathered from M2CW1. It appears that her staff members have awareness about her religious disposition and seem to link her kind and compassionate values at work to her strong faith. This interview was also mostly conducted in Tamil (a language spoken by the researcher) as the participant was not very fluent in the English language.

6.3.3.4c Narratives by M2CW3 and M2CW4

The next two narratives were conducted on-site on a field-trip and hour from Kuala Lumpur into the country Town of Slim River where, at a rather remote location, M2KP's water nursery was located for the purpose of cultivating aquatic plants. The researcher was accompanied by M2CW1 and M2CW2 on this trip. On this site, M2KP grows mostly a large variety of lotus and water lilies. There were also many fruit trees and a vegetable patch which serves the grocery needs of the workers who remain as caretakers on this large piece of land. They live in a purpose-built house located on this plot of land which also doubles up as an occasional weekend getaway retreat for M2KP and her family. At the time of our visit there were only two farm-workers on-site. The researcher was informed that at the height of their peak season when the firm had many simultaneously running projects there could be up to 30 workers, many of them sub-contractors who were employed to work on the farm. An interesting contrast to the greenery was a simple traditional structure located in the centre of the land. It was a Hindu temple, housing the idol of Lord Ganesh (the Lord believed to be the remover of obstacles). It was a tastefully built, well maintained, modern temple structure using high quality marble in its construction. One of the

farm workers interviewed (M2CW4) doubles up as the temple priest, conducting daily “puja” (a form of ceremonial worship ranging from brief daily rites to elaborate temple ritual). The temple was testimony of M2KP’s deep faith in Hindu tradition. It is fairly common to find businesses owned by Hindu’s in Malaysia often include a space dedicated for a religious altar where daily prayers and puja is conducted. In M2KP’s case, there was an altar at her office which was located in a city suburb, and on her aquatic farm out in the country, she even had a full-fledged Hindu temple built in honour of her faith.

Both M2CW3 and M2CW4 were highly gracious towards the rare visitor to the farm, offering fruits cultivated on the farm for refreshment. Both of them were migrant workers who had arrived from a remote village in India arriving together eight years ago to work for M2KP. They were hired through a labour agency. Prior to their deployment to Malaysia, M2CW3 had worked in farm-projects in Bangladesh and at an oil refinery in Kuwait in the Middle East while M2CW4 was an experienced farmer in a village in India. Both these workers have their own families with school-going children and elderly parents who rely on their income for their survival and sustenance back home in India. These two workers return to India every two to three years to visit their families. Their job at the nursery is mainly gardening, cultivating and maintaining the land and packaging the plants for transportation to project-sites. Both these workers report directly to M2CW1 who is younger to them in age. M2CW1 addresses them fondly as “elder brother” in the Tamil language even though these two workers report to him directly in the organisational hierarchy. As explained in the previous M1 case study, these are terms of endearment used traditionally as a mark of respect and affection in the Indian tradition.

The entire interview was conducted in the Tamil language, as both participants did not speak the English Language at all. According to M2CW3;

“...So when the opportunity to work in Malaysia arose, I decided to try and was employed by M2KP on a work permit...I was lucky because I discovered that she was a very kind-hearted person and I trust her completely. When my family was experiencing some financial difficulties due to some unexpected medical bill, M2KP loaned me MR\$5,000 without interest to be deducted from my monthly wage...Not many persons would act so kindly. I take great pleasure and pride in maintaining the temple. I know M2KP is very pleased that her temple is being consecrated without fail with daily ‘puja’. It’s a great honour for me to be able to perform these daily prayers and rites.”

M2CW4 also originates from the same village as M2CW3 and so they have become good friends since arriving together to work for M2KP. M2CW4 was highly animated and excited to talk about his opinion about M2KP, he emphatically responds:

“One hundred per cent, I will state that I have a very good boss!”

When he was asked to explain what he meant by that, he continues to explain:

“In so many ways she is a good boss. I have interacted with her during many different projects and on each occasion she was always so polite. She also pays us a very decent wage and whenever she visits the nursery, she always invites us to join her for a meal, sitting together with us, chatting about our lives, our families and so on. In my opinion she is a very loving person and has a good heart...I eventually will return home to take care of my elderly parents...to raise my ten year old son, but if M2KP asks me to stay on to work for her a bit longer, I will definitely consider it or I may return at a later time to work for her as she is someone I respect deeply...”

When M1CW4 was questioned about his views on M2KP’s spiritual practice and influence, he had this to say;

“She has made me a better person. Although I believed in God, I was not always religious. But since coming here to work, with the temple rites being performed daily on this land, I too have become more pious. I used to be a non-vegetarian, but now I know the benefits of being vegetarian and knowing that my boss and her entire family are vegetarians, I have made efforts to be a vegetarian too. Whenever there are special religious occasions, I observe the event, when previously I wasn’t so bothered to do so. I would say she has not

only helped me economically, but she has also alleviated me to be a better human being. I have become more responsible and caring towards my own family and others.” (M2CW4)

These narratives provided by the migrant labourers working on M2KP’s farm site is consistent with the account provided by her office staff, confirming her humane values towards her workers.

6.3.4 Data interpretation of Case Study M2

6.3.4.1 Analysis of self-disclosure by M2KP

It was quite obvious from M2KP’s interview that she had strong values based on her Hindu religious faith which she practices and shares openly with her staff members. The researcher was fortunate enough to watch her in action, during an intense incident that occurred during the time of the interview, where she displayed poise, courage and effective action as a leader. The incident is presented at length in Appendix 6.3.3.2 (b). Her workplace values are shaped and aligned to her spiritual values and she appears to take her spiritual seeking quite seriously making frequent dedicated pilgrimages to India for this reason. Her morals and ethics are influenced and shaped by her father and also her husband who both held strong spiritual values based on Hindu-based values of the laws of ‘*karma, dharma and samskara*’, which she adheres to strongly and it influences her decision-making and actions at work. She also informs that she upholds her spiritual values above that of business decisions, citing that humanitarian values are more important. She also indicated the internal conflicts that have to be overcome and external sacrifices that need to be made when operating in a less than ideal business environment which may sometimes be corrupt and unethical. Despite causing deep anguish when faced with values that challenge her own ideals, her extreme faith in the divine principles almost always helps her make effective decisions which she says are based on her deep conscience.

As a spiritual aspirant M2KP was committed to her seeking the higher dimension of life and appears to lead an integrated life as she seeks to apply her spiritual beliefs and values at work as much as possible. She is willing to suffer short-term losses or sacrifices and has long-term vision for herself that guides her actions and decisions even if it goes against the grain of business rational, but sits well internally with her spiritual faith. This results in a formidable disposition and certain strength of character when dealing especially in unpredictable external circumstances. This profile of M2KP draws a picture of a woman of integrity and courage at work, kind, humble and compassionate, but at the same time firm, dedicated, ethical and strong-willed. She also has a vision for herself, despite achieving all her professional goals in business, her attention is now turning towards social causes where she hopes to make a contribution in the future. M2KP clearly responds to difficult circumstances relying on an inner strength spiritual strength and belief sometimes to the point of even ignoring well-intentioned conventional advice from family or friends who care for her. This indicates that a spiritually inclined leader develops an inner spiritual guide and lives steadfast by that inner compass, rather than relying on the fickleness of constantly changing external forces which may or may not be in one's best interest or in the interest of everyone else impacted in the process of a leader's decision-making.

6.3.4.2 Analysis of family narratives

Although the conversations with the family members were not tape-recorded as they occurred during an invitation to participate in a religious ceremony at M1KPs residence, the researcher's observations were recorded through memory and notes taken on this occasion. The family members appeared warm and loving to one another. The researcher too was treated warmly as a guest, partaking in meals and events that occurred on the day. The other family members, guest, which included some staff members from work, as well as friends and M2KPs mother. At home, members of her family all share her passion for spiritual awareness and

although each member of her family displayed distinct personalities and different career goals, on the other hand they all seem to share similar high moral values in life and seem to have career ambitions that went beyond just making a living. Each had a passion for an altruistic interest that went beyond their own selfish desires and needs. Each child in her family was passionate towards contributing for an adopted cause they held to be important with an aim to serve the larger community or environment. It showed their dedication to pass on their values onto the next generation through a festivities, seemed to be effective. M2KP's children, despite each having their own unique and ambitious career plans - all displayed compassionate values like their mother. M2KP insist that through such festive get-togethers, there is good opportunity to transfer knowledge about the higher values in life to the younger and future generation.

Her husband (M2FM1), appeared to be a quiet subdued patriarch who appeared to be much loved and respected by all in the family. He indeed took pride in his acquired knowledge of the Hindu way of life and his influence on the his children and extended family was quite obvious, as even at the breakfast table, someone sought his advice on an important matter and he answered in a highly philosophical tone. M2KP openly credits him for her own spiritual growth and strength. M2FM1 seems to have played a crucial role in supporting the development of her own spiritual world-view. He did appear to be the "wise-elder" in the family. Despite the supportive family background, M2KP clearly holds her own views and acts in accordance with her own sense on how best to respond to a given situation, often making philosophical rather than cut and dry business choices. The communal spirit in which the religious event was celebrated was evident with guest of different religious denominations invited to attend. It highlighted that the family-like environment at work is fostered through treating their staff members like family too, as they are invited to participate in such festive celebrations at M2KPs family home regularly.

6.3.4.3 Analysis of co-worker narratives

An important observation is that M2KP was respected as a mentor and mother figure in the eyes of her staff. How she handled conflict was being silently observed. M2CW1 a key staff member who participated in this research, drew attention to the way she had handled the dramatic situation with the incident of the thug hurling abuses on the day the researcher was conducting interviews in their office premises. M2CW1 clearly had admiration for her courage, informing the researcher, he was in awe of her calm disposition when he himself was slightly rattled by the unpleasant incident. It points to the fact that staff members watch their leaders in action and it has a huge impact on their own morale and relationship to the leader. M2KP's spiritual attributes were openly shared and was appreciated by her staff members. It is important to note however that all the interviews were conducted with members of staff who were of the same religious denomination as M2KP. Staff of other faiths were not available for interview or were away on project-sites. The leader in this organisation appeared committed to the growth of her staff members as she was keen to teach them everything that she knew and was also providing various opportunities for staff to learn new skills. She did not micro-manage, but placed her trust in her staff and they in return appear to have a deep sense of gratitude and were eager to please her at work. They also displayed strong desire and willingness to hold the fort when she was away a lot on business and personal trips.

6.3.4.4 Analysis of symbolism in physical space M2

Similar to case study M1 the symbolic artefacts observed around the key participant M2KP provide ample evidence of her religious and spiritual inspirations. There was the religious altar at work where she conducts her prayers, also many other Hindu images around her office. Similarly at her home, there were more religious symbols such as statues and figurines of Hindu deities, the music that was playing was a religious hymn, marking the religious occasion, since the day of the

researcher's visit to M2KP's home was an auspicious Hindu occasion. Beyond these physical symbolisms, the guest list included a Reiki practitioner and healer, also a spiritual psychic suggesting that M1KP's social circle include people with similar interest in spirituality. The similarity between the M1 and M2 case-studies was the overt expression of religious and spiritual beliefs and the communal sharing of a variety related traditions that seem to be openly practised and accepted amongst people in their social and work environments.

6.4 AUSTRALIAN CASE STUDIES

Two case-studies were initially planned and organised during the course of this research, however due to unavoidable circumstances the second case-study was only partially executed, thus not discussed here. The following sections depicts the narratives obtained from the single Australian case-study that was completed with an aim to record similarities and differences between their Eastern counterparts in the data interpretation and summary presented at the end of this chapter.

6.4.1 Case Study A1 – Company and key participant profile

The key participant in the Australian case study had worked for one of the big four banks in Australia for over 25 years. His firm is a financial services organisation with over 40,000 people, operating in more than 1,800 branches and service centres, and responsible to more than 460,000 shareholders. This bank operates major financial services franchises in Australia, as well as businesses in New Zealand, Asia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The key participant A1KP at the time of the study worked in the Leadership Development Academy at the central Headquarters of this financial institute.

6.4.1.1 Profile of participants in Australian Case Study A1

Table 6.3 in the following page presents the brief profile of participants who were interviewed to provide layers of information based on their personal or professional relationship with the key Australian participant (A1KP) of Case-study A1. This include the self-disclosure provided by AIKP, an interview with his immediate family members which was conducted in AIKP’s family home and several interviews with co-workers who currently work with AIKP or have worked with him in the past. Most of these interviews except for one with his former boss was conducted at AIKPs ultra-modern office which is the central Headquarters of the bank As most interviews were conducted during office hours, the researcher was able to observe the high level of security and compliance culture at the bank where there were strict security systems and formal policies that regulated the arrival and receipt of visitors to the office premises. Participants were interviewed in pre-booked Conference rooms arranged prior to researcher’s arrival.

No.	Interviewee	Relationship to Key Informant	Age Range	Gender	Status/Years Known	Religious or Spiritual Belief
1	A1KP	(Key Participant)	Mid 40s	Male	Married	Christian
Narrative Interview with Family Members						
2	A1F1	Wife	Mid 40s	Female	About 30 years	Christian
3	A1F2	Daughter	Teenager	Female	14 years	Non- practising Christian
4	A1F3	Daughter	Teenager	Female	11years	Non-practising Christian
Narrative Interviews with Co-Workers						
7	A1CW1	Reports to A1KP	Mid 30s	Female	18 months	Declined to state
8	A1CW2	Reported to A1KP, but now are peers	Early 30s	Male	18 months	Christian
9	A1CW3	Reports to A1KP	Early 40’s	Female	12 months	Spiritual, not religious, inclined towards Buddhism principles
10	A1CW4	Senior Manager (retired) Former boss to key participant	Mid 60’s	Male	15 years	Catholic

11	A1CW5	Senior Manager Current Boss to key participant	Mid 40s	Female	One year	Spiritual, not religious
12	A1CW6	Peer to A1KP	Early 40s	Female	4-5 years	Declined to state
13	A1CW7	Peer to A1KP	Early 40s	Female	One year	Declined to state

Table 6.3 Profile of Participants in Case Study A1

6.4.1.2 Case Study A1: Self disclosure of (Western) business leader

The case-study (A1) was with a Senior Manager within one of the four leading banks in Australia. This participant carries the title Senior Academy Consultant (SAC) and from here-on will be referred to as A1KP for the purpose of anonymity and easy reference. A brief profile of A1KP is already presented in Chapter 4 as JE(M). His keen interest and availability to participate in Phase II of this research and also his relevant representation of the subject of inquiry, working within a very large banking corporation for almost 27 years, made A1KP a very unique and exceptional personality to study. Due to his long service in this bank, A1KP has had extensive experience in many different sectors of the bank with a broad range of exposure to different banking products and services. Also he has worked with in various sub-cultures that exist in different sectors of the bank and over the decades under different changing leadership has also experienced different management styles. A1KP had recently moved to his present role in the Leadership Academy of the bank which has been a total change from the various business roles he had held in the past.

“I used to work in this same building but in different sectors of the bank in various business roles and I am now loving the shift to the training role which I’m now doing for almost 8 months. It has been a total change but it uses everything that I’ve ever done before or thought about before, or having experienced before and what’s been interesting about this change in my role is that even times before in my career when I’ve felt I was in the wrong place and having a lot of personal difficulty with the work or feeling unaligned with what was important to me, even those times have now become useful to me because I can now talk about them as stories to help other people on their journey.”

That many years of practical experience gained from working in many sub-cultures within the bank he says, comes in handy in the training room where he was able to empathise with the trainees, speaking to them from the same space that they are at in their career paths. His current role is in the area of Training and Development which he says is a role ‘he almost invented for himself’ within the bank.

At work, A1KP is part of a team-based structure within the Organisational Capability Unit which belongs in the Human Resource Function of the bank. This Unit designs, manages and delivers training and development programs for building the capability of organisational members within the senior ranks of the bank. Being a central facility, this Unit serves across its many branches, totalling 40,000 employees. A1KP refers to himself as a Leadership Ambassador on Academy leadership and talent programs.

In his mid-forties, A1KP is married with two teenage daughters. He used to attend the Anglican Church but admits that in recent times, they have not fulfilled their religious obligations very much, especially since his teenage daughters have developed an aversion to attending Church services. A1KP loves working with people and says he enjoys his role in helping other senior managers take their leadership skills a notch higher to the next level. He is also very keen and interested with the deep meaning of life and tries to integrate all aspects of his life with his own quiet and inner spiritual journey.

The researcher had the opportunity to acquaint with this respondent over a period of four years meeting with him formally in his office and home and also informally at cafes and restaurants. The researcher was also able to establish a comfortable friendship with this participant and his family through casual meetings with his family comprising his wife and two teenage daughters. The relationship between researcher and participant were further strengthened particularly through the genuine sharing of interest in the subject area of spirituality. Through one

of such exchanges a significant impact was that of a book entitled “*A New Earth Earth*” by Eckhart Tolle, (2009) which was recommended by the researcher to the participant at a time when he was transitioning from his old role at the bank to his present one.

“The book you recommended to me was quite an awakening for me. I then went on and did a presentation on that book to a number of people, particularly around the workings of the ego and how it (the ego) forces you to do things that are not necessarily aligned with what one should really be doing. So that was quite an insight for me at that time, almost 12 months now.”

A1KP had found the book personally inspiring and had made various presentations to a number of colleagues at work, based on ideas in that particular book. Finding the book personally inspiring and highly engaging when he shared it with his colleagues at work, it was an example of how this participant was willing to grow and share his spiritual journey with others at work.

“Also the idea of universal connectedness...I now have a very open mind about that. I think I now can see the idea of putting something out into the Universe and a response comes. Examples of that would be where people I’ve worked with in the area of career guidance discussions which I do quite a lot of in my current role, one particularly lady who I worked with rang me last week after I had discussed with her some different options for a different career path for her just a week earlier, saying how excited she was that after our discussion all of a sudden she has four opportunities that she is looking at, so that’s an example I can think of how by putting an idea out into the Universe and something comes back. Since we last met (almost 3 years ago) when I used to think there was a connectedness to a supreme consciousness I’ve had a few instances when my belief in a conscious universe out there was validated when I noticed that when I put out an intention, there is a response.”

Also the spiritual discussions between A1KP and the researcher created a comfortable bond allowing the researcher to gain good insight into the spiritual values and aspirations of A1KP.

“I wouldn’t say I feel any intensification in my spiritual journey but rather a steady progression, since we last met. In terms of going to Church we have fallen right off over that period. I don’t feel very connected to the Anglican Church very much at all now as I used to. I still feel Christian but I don’t feel so much Anglican, which is interesting

because I really like the Minister at the St John's Anglican Church which is where we were used to attend. So it's got nothing to do with the Church Minister whom I really like but rather the form of the Church, which I felt was getting more and more sort of high Anglican in its style and we probably started going less because our girls were getting older and they were getting less interested although they had many family services on Sundays which were quite free form but the girls who are fourteen and twelve now (referring to his daughters) had lost interest..." (see Appendix 6.4.3 for full excerpt)

In the excerpt above, A1KP narrates that despite moving away from church attendance due to family influences, his spiritual journey has steadily progressed.

"So ultimately it's been a good year for me in terms of changing into what I think is the right vocation for me and working with some good people. I've never felt so appreciated in my life. I'm constantly getting so much positive feedback and I'm having to learn how to deal with that because I've never had it before. I've always found it so hard to receive all those compliments as I was always so willing to run down my own contribution or attribute it to others or that sort of thing and so I'm having to learn to take that with grace..." (see Appendix 6.3.4 for full excerpt)

In this excerpt A1KP relates his struggle to accept compliments even for a job well-done and in the full excerpt (Appendix 6.3.4) he reveals his efforts at learning to deal with this new positive events in his work-life.

"I've become really conscious of the gratitude I have for being born in this country, for having such a privileged up-bringing with my parents making so many sacrifices for my education and this organisation giving me so many opportunities and I realise its making me so grateful that I was losing my edge and I'm not being as challenging to people around me that I should have been. Because I need to challenge people's thinking which is part of my role now, to challenge people, including my boss. So the hard part for me is that my boss has given me a fantastic opportunity, so therefore I won't challenge her – it's kind of a grateful subservient mode and gratitude is not a good place to challenge from... The level of humility I have is overplayed and it can backfire in my area of work. It's the whole thing about standing up - this is what I stand for, what I believe, this is what I do. This is not to say that humility is bad. I do believe very strongly in humility – I do believe it is important to be humble. I talk to people all the time about being humble because it creates readiness for more learning..."

In this excerpt A1KP relates his struggle with gratitude. A deeply spiritual value, to have an open heart with gratitude and humility he recognises as an important value, yet he questions if it holds him back from challenging the status quo. In this account A1KP was struggling a bit to articulate his inner conflict of appearing too passive for being too grateful and humble in his demeanour, particularly to his bosses. When the researcher questioned if this feeling he has might have anything to do with the existing organisational culture within the bank, he responded;

“Probably – if I took the organisational culture away, perhaps in a different organisational environment, a being who is very humble and grateful is actually very strong. So I am trying to balance that with the reality of where I work. It is the projection of my humility and gratitude and how others perceive it in this organisational culture. So if I believe I’m a force for good in this organisation, which I do, because I’m trying to move the people and organisation forward through leadership and focus on people...”

This conversation between the researcher and the key participant trailed into a moment of self-doubt for A1KP, as the researcher asked him to clarify why he felt his values of gratitude, humility and compassion was perceived to be a weakness rather than a strength. In questioning the key participant, it becomes obvious that A1KP re-evaluates his responses on the spot and questions himself more deeply about the subject of compassion, humility and gratitude. It is a good illustration of many other moments with this participant as well as other participants during the Heuristics research process when gratifying moments are felt when participants appear to have a break-through or insight into their own selves when responding to the questions posed by the researcher.

“Maybe what you are questioning is why my inner conflict when I truly believe in those values? But something is stopping me from being as forceful or even energised, although I feel a lot of energy around it, do I do it? Do I enact it? Not enough. So what is it in me that is getting in the way of me doing more of this? My feeling was my humility overplayed...” (See Appendix 6.3.4 for full excerpt)

When pressed further to clarify his apprehensions, A1KP does deliberate whether the source of his apprehensions is from self-doubt or rather from external structures ingrained in the organisation's culture which is hard to challenge or break through.

“The feedback that I am getting from my bosses is that I should be promoting more of what I do for two reasons. Basically putting me into this role is an experiment in a sense, so it needs to work, to be seen to work, otherwise it would stop or they won't ever do it again within this bank - that I should be proud of what I do... You are questioning why my reluctance and I think, sometimes when I have stepped up or put myself out there a little bit, something in response has happened that sort of put me back in my place.... So that's happened to me in the past. Now, I'm not conscious of that, I'm stretching the envelope on that these days.”

During this interview, it appeared that A1KP was self-reflecting as the interview progressed, prompted by the researchers probing questions and he had an epiphany to suggest he may be held back by the organisational culture from showing too much forward thinking initiative which influenced him on a sub-conscious level, thus the anxiety not to push the boundaries too much.

“That's a belief that I have, that I am really challenging now because I'm in a fairly neutral position now where my roles cuts across all sub-cultures of the bank. There are two main things that stand out for me...” (See Appendix 6.3.4 for full excerpt)

At this juncture, A1KP relates two main events when he took responsibility and accountability for a high-profile failed project and for voicing out his concern to his superior to design a job that suited his interest and ability. As he relates in the full excerpt Appendix 6.3.4) it was obvious that a culture of fear in the bank which prevented people from taking responsibility...so he designed himself a job to challenge this culture.

“So I designed my perfect job, and I had many meetings with many managers in different sectors of the bank and I finally met my current boss who saw a fit and she gave me this job under the Human Resource umbrella, what we call People and Culture in our internal structure. So I designed the role, so that anything that I'm not good at is not part of the role. So it's a complete focus on my strength.... My bit is around mentoring, coaching, facilitation, workshops and being a leadership ambassador which is sharing stories about

my leadership experience, challenging people's thinking and responding to tricky questions people have about values or emotional intelligence or what have you..." (See Appendix 6.3.4 for full excerpt)

A1KP confides that even those periods that he hated his job, he now sees as a blessing in disguise as it helps him in his current role, using his own many true experiences of both failures and triumphs in his many different roles throughout his tenure at the bank, as stories and material for his current coaching and mentoring role.

"During those difficult times at work, it can spill over into my family life, when I've been very distant and not present, not able to really deal with anymore, so probably leaving the problems of raising my two kids largely to my wife. My current work-life balance is much better. I do a lot of self-disclosure in the training room as part of my role is to invoke humility in the trainees and so more often than not I'm sharing all those things that has gone wrong for me, what I've learnt from them, rather than what's gone well."

He also confesses how during his difficult days in his career, his work-life balance suffered and in the earlier segment (see Appendix 6.3.4) of this interview.

When asked if he would discuss his personal or spiritual values with his colleagues at work, A1KP said he normally is quite open about his values and with a few colleagues he may venture to talk about his spiritual values, but not necessarily using the spiritual language. It indicates that in the Western setting, unlike the Eastern workplace, there is a clear reluctance to use overtly spiritual language to be politically correct. So there is a tendency to secularise and use neutral language, even when an individual has a strong inner expression of spirituality.

"Most of them know I am a deep thinker and that I think often about values and that sort of a thing."

This interview with the key Australian participant ended with him giving details of some of his work-colleagues who were willing to speak to me and also a tour of his work-site, modern office building in the city, with open-plan arrangements, hi-tech facilities and funky spaces and informal lounges to encourage interaction for people to meet with colleagues for a chat or coffee.

Security was tight and A1KP had to arrange a special visitor pass for security reasons, before the researcher was allowed to tour the site. Arrangements were also made to visit his family the following weekend and spend an afternoon with him and his family..

6.4.1.3 Case Study A1 – Narratives from family members

The researcher was invited to spend an afternoon with A1KP's family where she met his wife (A1FM1) and his two young teenage daughters, the eldest who was fourteen years old (A1FM2) and his youngest who was eleven (A1FM3) at the time of the interview. The researcher was allowed some private time alone with his daughters, as M1KP and his wife took the family dog out for a walk leaving the researcher to talk to his daughters freely in their absence. The two girls were initially shy and appeared nervous about speaking about themselves and their relationship to their dad, but they soon warmed up and were volunteering information that provided multiple perspectives on the key participant seen from the lenses of his close family.

The two girls both saw their dad as a loving and caring father figure who makes them feel special and that they liked to have him around. The elder of his two daughters was more participative in the interview process as the younger girl was happy for her elder sister to represent her viewpoints. They both openly shared that between mum and dad, they were more close to mum and mum was always the first port of call in their lives rather than dad. However, on certain matters they were likely to approach dad, for example when having issues with homework and school matters. The girls initially felt a bit awkward discussing their dad and the researcher had to first earn their trust, talking to them about friends and their personal interest and only when they were beginning to warm up, the topics related to the research was broached. Both girls were quite different in character, the younger being rather shy and introverted and the elder, who was more extroverted and sociable responded to most of the questions representing her younger sister, speaking on her behalf openly. It was obvious they were very close to one another

as they themselves admitted. Both the girls informed the researcher that they did not like or believe in their religious faith and found having to attend church such a chore.

“We used to attend church every week before, but now we go only once a year for Christmas. We (referring to herself and her younger sister) mainly didn’t want to go to church and that’s why dad and mum stop going as often as well. I don’t believe in God and I do believe that we go somewhere when we die, but I don’t believe in God or Church, I didn’t like anyone... I didn’t get along with anyone in the Church...they were kind off different and whatever they were interested in, I couldn’t understand at all...But I know Dad believes in a God, and we don’t really talk about that and since he does not drag us there every week and we go only for Christmas, we don’t mind it, it is part of the whole Christmas celebration thing, but we won’t go every week. Dad wouldn’t make us go either. He is not that kind of person, if we didn’t like something and we had our own personal choices on some things, he was always very accepting of that.” (See Appendix 6.4.1.3 for full excerpt)

This disclosure from A1KP’s daughter confirms why A1KP himself stopped attending church, which he had confided in an earlier interview. The daughters also spoke of a time when their dad was not happy in his job a while back when he did not have time for things he enjoyed like golf and family-time but they have noticed that these days, he was much happier and he seems to be able to spend more time with them and also do the things he likes to do. The girls also mentioned how they were quite close with Dad’s immediate family, with their grandparents, their Uncles and first cousins. The girls have quite different ambitions, the elder wishes to be in the film industry while the younger hopes to find a career in fashion.

In a separate subsequent meeting, A1KP had shared his struggles about his elder daughter who was later diagnosed with an eating disorder and was in and out of hospital a lot. This was a personally difficult time for the key participant, as a parent, managing the emotional stress around that particularly difficult family period due to his daughter’s ill health. A1KP shared how his faith in a spiritual practice deepened during that period of his life and he was far more reflective in handling the delicate situation at home with a sick child and supporting his other

daughter and wife through that period involved him taking time out for himself to re-centre himself and find inner balance through the spiritual practice of silence, going away on his own for a few days in-between his busy schedule, simply to be completely by himself in the country. He shared that the time alone, gave him a sense of peace and connection to the universal energy and he was able to find some comfort and was able to return to dealing with events in his life with greater clarity and acceptance, allowing himself to manage well his many responsibilities in the office and the home-front, even though it was a big personal challenge for him and his family at that time.

6.4.1.4 Case Study A1 – Narratives from co-workers (CWs)

This section provides narratives from staff members who work at A1's office. Some of them reported to A1KP. Some others were his peers who worked alongside him in team-based structures. Also interviewed were his current boss and former boss who is now retired after working in the bank for over thirty years.

6.4.1.4a Narrative with co-worker A1CW1

The first interview was held with A1CW1, a staff member who works closely with A1KP. This participant had worked with A1KP for 18 months in the Bank's Academy, a centralised business school where A1KP is the leader of the Leadership Talent and Design team. A1CW has been working for this bank for five years at the time of the interview. She has fortnightly peer mentoring sessions together with A1KP whom she describes as the "Leadership Ambassador" who co-facilitates on some of the Bank's Leadership Development Programs and Talent Development Programs where he draws from his own long history working with the bank in his many prior business roles within the bank to contribute towards their leadership syllabus. A1CW1 develops the curriculum for these Programs and she has developed a close working

relationship with AIKP in developing this leadership academy. In describing her working relationship with AIKP, she says:

“I really enjoy working with AIKP because he is very grounded and very constructive in what can be a highly political work environment within this large complex system, where many areas of our business is also highly political. I admire his ability to hold his own values in this highly political environment where I see people sometimes may hold a certain value within themselves, but do speak up or advocate their values and not follow thru with their behaviour, but I see with AIKP, on many occasions in a subtle way, not in a confrontational way, also not passively but in an active constructive way stand for what he believes...

On this occasion AICWI provides a good example to displays AIKPs qualities of integrity which is highly admired. And valued.

On our recent review, I saw how AIKP’s comments added great value in shifting the dynamics of the behaviour of the whole group as this process which is highly political with 10-12 managers sitting in a room deliberating on whether to move someone upwards or downwards on the performance scale to meet the statistical distribution required... Again his style was not at all confrontational but got to change the dynamics in the room is a very subtle way. He was actually advocating his values and bringing his voice into the leadership team, his comments based on his experience and his style during this process helped to shift the dynamics and make the behaviour of the other assessors in the room to become quite principled after that. This is why I value AIKP’s presence in my work environment because he is quite subtle and people don’t necessarily recognise the depth of his offering in the presence that he brings to others in such, a valuable skill particularly in a sensitive moment when someone is deciding on the performance fate of their colleagues.

In the following AICWI provides another example that illustrates AIKP’s ability to function in the external world guided by his own inner values rather than be influenced by external pressures world or for mere ego-boosting endeavours

To give you another example here at this bank we have two career paths, one is a “leadership” career path and the other is “professional specialist”, so Leaders have direct reports but if you are a Specialist you don’t have a team of direct reports to be called a leader... Often people are pushed into or encouraged to take the direct report Leadership career path , but AIKP was quite clear he wanted to be on the specialist

path...He has diligently stayed true to that purpose for himself although there was pressure to take on the more traditional route of Leadership path with direct reports which would bring accolades, organisational status where the extrinsic rewards are enormous ...In fact he keeps getting seduced to take the other offers and it is very flattering for him to keep getting these opportunities to take the traditional path but fighting them off to stay true to his principles around what he wants to do shows us his principles and integrity in what he believes and knows for himself..." (see Appendix 6.4.1.4a for full excerpt)

This comment by A1CW1 shows the admiration of a fellow colleague/peer of the key participant who values A1KP's presence in the team highlighting his integrity and sense of fairness and justice in evaluating performance of staff during the bank's performance appraisal system which was described in the interview to be a political process. This informant also emphasised her high regard for the key participant whom she describes as someone who had clarity about his own strengths and aptitudes and staying true to his own sense of purpose at work despite having numerous attractive offers within the bank's career ladder to take on far more lucrative positions. The informant admired his sense of integrity and clarity to choose a career path which was not as rewarding materially within a system where status conscious players scramble for the top jobs, a process that is not only highly competitive but political as well. The informant saw the key participant as a rare individual, a man with personal integrity who did not play the system he could easily handle but instead who stayed true to his own inner value system of choosing a less attractive career path where his skills and experience at influencing, coaching and mentoring adds great value to his current senior team of colleagues he works with and for the overall interest of the institution. A1CW1 also mentions how the current boss to whom the key participant reports to has shared with her that his presence in her team was very important as he brought a certain different dynamics to the overall Leadership team as he almost represents a principled beacon who helps others think about the right thing to do in their various decision-making capacities. According to this informant, A1KP's boss had confided in her that she hopes

to keep A1KP on her team as she was well aware that many others within the bank are trying to seduce him back to a more traditional path in other sectors of the bank. This highlights how the key participant is valued highly for his contributions and presence in his work engagements. When A1CW1 was asked about her observations of A1KP beyond his professional capacities, she responded as follows:

“I can make an informed comment about this because I’ve had conversations with A1KP about this so this is not just purely based on my observation and perception of him, but I’ve had conversations with him when he’s shared that a large part of his working life at the bank he had to separate out who he truly was and he couldn’t bring the essence of who he was in past roles in the business. He couldn’t be holistic. I think he is now on that journey of transitioning from that state and almost revelling and now enjoying bringing all of who he is to work, although I think he is still playing with that and experimenting with that because he spent such a long part of his working life having to separate himself out. This role he is now is almost a crucible for him to be able to do that more blatantly.”

In this revelation by A1CW1, it is obvious that A1KP was realigning his workplace values with his own deeper values in life, forgoing lucrative offers and resisting to take a role that did not allow him to bring his whole self to work. It provides a clue that a spiritually inspired individual aims to live a life of alignment to his higher values, and would be willing to make material sacrifices rather than chase after extrinsic rewards merely to boost his ego.

“...There are very diverse cultures in our bank, the tones of which are often set by the many leaders in many different sectors of the bank, and the leaders in each sub-division within the overall business influence a lot of the sub-cultures of their business areas, and so there are certainly some sectors within the overall culture that don’t encourage people to bring all of their full self to work.”

In this response, A1CW1 indicates that there are sub-cultures within the bank that are not conducive to bringing your whole-self to work. This is very common in most organisations, where the leader at the helm sets the tone for the group or organisation he leads. So if there are ruthless leaders, there would be ruthless cultures. If there are spiritually-inspired leaders, there

would be a culture of high ideals, morals and humanity. It is clear from this information why M1KP, being spiritually inspired chose a less lucrative deal in the bank, in order to honour his true self at work and pursue a more authentic career-path in line with his personal life values.

“...AIKP has spoken to me about his values but he hasn’t really spoken about his spirituality or rather he hasn’t used the language around spirituality but he certainly has talked about his personal journey and what is meaningful to him at work when he is finding meaning and purpose in his personal life and his personal transitioning journey from a work context...He is actually an interesting personality because he is exceptionally approachable, very relational, yet I wouldn’t say he is an extrovert, I’d say he is quite introverted. But when you think of introverted people, you wouldn’t think they are approachable yet AIKP is, even in his body language he is approachable for people to feel comfortable around him...”

A1CW1 indicates that AIKP does not openly discuss his spiritual values at work, however from the full excerpt it is obvious that this co-worker recognises his workplace values come from a deeply held inner value which she says is not rational, suggesting it is not merely from an intellectual discriminating dimension.

“As a final word and I’ve hinted on that before, I would say this is a highly political large system to work in and I have my own value dilemmas within that, and being very value orientated myself, the system can be very depersonalising and therefore AIKP has had a big impact for me and its part of the reason I spoke up and told him how I appreciate his presence at work... AIKP is sort of a role model of that for me....His presence gave me hope, not to give up, and that you can make change, that you can live in a principled and value-centred way in an organisation and often we can lose sight of that. The only other thing I would say about AIKP is that he has an important quality in his dynamic is that he actually won’t buy into the politics at the workplace, which is great, which is good, that is a really positive thing...so he kind of role models in a really constructive, principled purposeful way of being but he doesn’t speak badly about people, he won’t bad mouth people, you know the human politics, people can get into the whole dialog around human politics, but you will never here AIKP speaking badly about somebody. ”

Here A1CW1 hints at the political climate in the bank which can be demoralising and indicating how the presence of A1KP is highly valuable to mitigate negative environments, to help alleviate organisational pain and soften blows for co-workers and subordinates.

“...so there is a privacy and wise counsel piece to him that he won’t buy into that. So he doesn’t create factions because he doesn’t bad mouth or criticize... So if you think success is the clothes you wear, the roles you play, status and money but I think if you ask me doing work that you really feel engaged in and feeling that you are making a difference and I see A1KP operating from the latter credo that I’m talking about rather than the earlier one.” (see Appendix 6.4.14a for full excerpt)

This narrative above from A1CW1 gives a deep appreciation of how A1KP’s presence impacts upon herself as a colleague and how his principle centred, value-driven personality is a rare attribute to be found at leadership levels. This informant clearly appreciates the value A1KP brings to the team-dynamics within the leadership team he belongs to. This interview also highlighted many subtle ways in which A1KP having anchored himself in his own values and internal compass, does not engage in destructive human politics that can be devastatingly damaging to individuals in an organisation rife with office politics. Although this informant did not know the key participant for that long (12-18 months), she was able to perceive and appreciate these rare and subtle qualities of A1KP’s. She insists A1KP impacts her and others in the team positively and provides hope even in a highly political and impersonal organisational system.

6.4.1.4b Narrative by A1CW2

This informant used to report to the A1KP and so their relationship at work has evolved from that of a subordinate to being just friendly colleagues at work. A1KP was A1CW2’s manager for a period of 18 months a few years back.

“I can summarise my relationship with A1KP as a leader who has a lot of emphasis about people. He certainly in many ways gives a lot of time to people. He also allows a level of

dialog that is not hierarchical. He is not a command-control, master-servant kind of a leader, but treats one as a peer even when he had the managerial authority over someone. AIKP also openly admits to his strengths but also acknowledges where his own weaknesses are and therefor he looks for complementary aspects with others in the team he works for to help him and members of his team to all deliver. AIKP has a particular gift in how he deals with difficult confronting/conflicting situations where he is good at maintaining a level of composure and calmness in dealing with such circumstances.”

Here A1CW2 indicates AIKP’s high level of skill in human relations and communications.

“A specific example I can share was a key project in which I worked with AIKP in the bank and in that project he was going through a very, very difficult time then in terms of meeting deadline, keeping members of the stakeholders happy, at the same time having to deliver some bad news to the team and superiors because things were changing beyond anyone’s control. In that conflict situation, in any corporations when things go wrong, there are always all kinds of blaming and finger-pointing happening and being the owner of the project, AIKP had to bear a lot of that directly and indirectly. In many heated moments, AIKP had to respond and work-out how to keep things moving through despite personal attacks, criticisms and defamation as well to a large extent. That’s when I noticed AIKPs ability to keep calm in dealing with difficult situations and keep his head up and keep moving on.”

When asked if A1CW2 could speculate where might have AIKP’s source of calmness and composure be from, in those events he mentioned, he responds:

“I’d say it’s from his own personality, linking to that, his personal value, probably through his upbringing and I’m aware that AIKP has been involved to a limited extent been involved as a Christian in an Anglican Church. That’s probably one source. Secondly, I’d say his connection with his own family where he has two daughters and wife. They are an important part of his life and I’m sure he draws strength from that. Thirdly, he draws from his own career experience in dealing with many different leaders where he draws on the positive aspect of his past leaders and uses his experience with them to apply to his own leadership style. I know of at least one such leader whom AIKP thinks highly of...AIKP has often spoken highly of them and shared how he had enjoyed those eras under the leadership of those ex-CEOs.” (see Appendix 6.4.1.4b for full excerpt)

When this participant was asked if AIKP ever discusses his spiritual values or practices at work, he responds as follows:

“He has spoken personally with me probably not so much of his deep spiritual values as such due to the level of professional distance maintained at the workplace which is natural I’d say. But he does talk fairly openly with me about his Church involvements as a Treasurer for many years in his old Church also being in the Church Committee and so forth. I’m also a Christian and personally my belief is a very big part of my life and I guess a very core reference point for me. In terms of whether I’m religious or spiritual, I’ll probably say I’m more spiritual rather than religious. I am very very active in my own Church and my whole family are Christians and many decisions and things I do in my life are based on my Christian belief...Personally, I am very sensitive of the professional context we are in. Some of these spiritual aspects are very personal and can be freely expressed, however without getting in the way or putting pressure or awkwardness in our peers, so I am very sensitive to that. My knowledge of AIKP’s membership in a church allows me to discuss with him on a deeper level rather than an introductory level as he understands more about this subject.” (see Appendix 6.4.1.4b for full excerpt)

This participant was of an Asian origin and so when asked about his background he explains

“I was born in Hong Kong with a Chinese ancestry.”

The researcher took the opportunity to question this participant about his views on why in the Eastern context, spirituality and religion was part and parcel of workplace conversations whereas within the Western context the subject appears quite taboo. He responds:

“First of all, let me clarify that I’ve never felt awkward or even restrict myself from expressing my views or my own personal belief. Perhaps within the context of the workplace, how much time and how much of a conversation around the subject of spirituality, how much of it I actually share, I treat it as no different to my conversations about say AFL (Australian Football) or other sports. Recognising that my peers might or might not be interested or may not actually want to discuss it, the same principle applies to my faith. But say someone asks me a question about my faith, then I would very openly discuss the subject without any qualms. Personally as a Christian I feel I am called to this workplace to do a good job, therefore my purpose to be here is to work the hardest I can,

not so much because I'm a Christian, I must talk about it and you must believe what I believe. So simply by focussing on my job at hand I believe I'm a doing what my God commands us to do in terms of where we work."

The researcher pressed further to question this fairly religious Christian participant as to why in the Eastern workplace, it was common to see religious symbols, rituals, rites and celebrations surrounding religious beliefs as a common phenomenon, whereas in the Western workplace even the most celebrated Christmas or Easter traditions are to a large extent secularised, ignoring their religious or spiritual meaning? To this he responds:

"I'll say I'm sad. I'm very sad about those particular circumstances. Christmas and Easter in Melbourne for example has been subjected to a level of political correctness in our society to not even spell the word, by turning it into something like "Seasons Greetings". That to me is very sad, but its beyond my control, but to answer your question why this has happened, I would say that especially in the Australian culture and where we are in the 21st century we have entered and age of pluralism to the extent that although we in some way tolerate and recognise that there are many different belief and different faiths, to the point that we almost bring it down to the lowest denominator, so that we do not offend anybody by being too expressive about it."

A1CW2 expresses his disappointment that in the Australian culture the political correctness around religious practice is quite extreme to the point that people don't feel comfortable to openly practice or share about their faiths.

"Even when if they were asked to comment about their faiths, there is a level of reluctance and denial about it and that to me is very sad. For example the reason why we have a Christmas holiday is really to recognise the religious linkage which is now being diluted to almost saying this is a socially, commonly accepted holiday season that should not be linked back to any religious origin...There seems to be an underlying fear of any one particular group showing dominance. I need to clarify that in this bank where I work; there is not any policy against expression of faith or any such restriction. So in fact, we can still quite freely express our views on anything if we chose to, but there is an unwritten code about it..."

Here A1CW2 clarifies that the bank does not have any explicit policy against or for religious practice at work, but the general organisational norm is to avoid such practice or discussions at work.

“The organisation is located in a secular world. Which means we can only extend our conversations and the way we connect with one another on a secular level, unless if it is invited, openly invited to be expressed to the next level of depth. I do know of a number of my fellow colleagues who are Christians and there are a lot of them and we are very open to each other about it. We also regularly get together, once every fortnight or over lunchtime where we bring our sandwich and we pray together and study the bible together both in our Melbourne and Sydney offices and other interstate places too. So in many ways in a general sense it is not openly talked about on a day to day basis, but there are communities that exist within the organisation of different groups, no different to an interest group, but certainly spiritual and religious based group do exist, whereby informally these communities are formed and the organisation has not once shut them down or said you shall not get together anymore.”

Here A1CW2 provides further evidence to suggest that there are no formal restrictions against religious assembly at work.

“So I must say that part, I’m truly encouraged and not sad about...I’m not aware if religious groups of non-christian denomination exist in this organisation, but I know that in this building we used to have a wellness room that was designed, as a lockable room for people to book if they have to practice any particular religious rituals or conduct any spiritual practice, they are allowed to use that room for that purpose. But that room has been recently removed due to lack of use and not for any other reason...” (See Appendix 6.4.1.4b for full excerpt)

This piece of information from A1CW2 was quite interesting as it showed how the secular national culture of the country influences the organisational culture within organisations where members adopt secular norms reflected in the larger society. It was interesting to note that even though there were no formal policies or restrictions about spiritual or religious expression in the workplace, there was an unwritten rule that everyone observed and that the provision of space for spiritual or religious practice was so under-utilised that it was eventually removed. Bringing the

narrative back to the key participant, A1CW2 acknowledges that his knowledge of A1KP's Christian background has helped their relationship, he explains;

"...in the way that there is a level of mutual respect and trust based on that common understanding. But having said that, I would not say neither A1KP or I rely on our Christian background to gain trust and respect as colleagues at work, but certainly it helps when there are some uncertainties it helps to bridge some of the gaps especially if you are asked to respect or trust a person without any prior knowledge or evidence, then in those instances a person's faith is a good indicator of their value systems and the best basis you can fall on to judge their character when you know their personal belief. We can be more effective as an organisation if we can develop the level of trust beyond day to day mutual respect and professionalism at the workplace."

In the following excerpt A1CW2 provides deep insight into the culture of the bank, which does not necessarily have a culture of trust and for this reason, is reliant upon layers of validations. This he says contributes to creating barriers and a negative culture of defence, instead of mutual trust and responsibility, especially when things go wrong.

"This is especially true in our organisation where a large part of our infrastructure is built around the fact that we have to prevent fraudulent activities or things that are unethical according to our company policy because we can't trust everybody, so we need to have security measures in place on many levels, not just physical level, e.g. in terms of governance, integrity of data, facts that we present, business case recommendations, relationships related to compliance issues, all those things we need to have validation upon validation upon validation that are tedious to make sure it's not just based on trust but clear evidence and facts to back everything what we do. Although this is a good corporate governance practice, but my question or my challenge to the organisation is that, would the organisation be more efficient and effective, if we are able to create an in-built culture of trust and respect if we can remove some extra layers of validation to have just the sufficient amount necessary validation in order for us to move forward. We unfortunately have become overly litigious and cautious and so forth because we can't trust one another and this is very evident every time when we have something go wrong in the organisation the level of defence and barriers from everybody just goes up another level...In such times people watch their own backs and abdicate their responsibilities even personal responsibilities, because, say I know it has gone wrong here, but someone else

has signed off on it, so according to the process they have done the right thing but something has gone wrong and people are not taking responsibility. But if there is mutual trust and reliance upon one another I think the organisation can be a lot more nimble and a lot more effective.”

Returning his attention to the key participant, he scores A1KP with an above average score on the issue of mutual trust and respect.

“On an average in my career of about fifteen odd years I’d say A1KP would be on an above average scale when it comes to the question of mutual trust and respect. I will put it down to a level of openness that A1KP has, and a non-hierarchical approach to things and also a level of mutual care that is being expressed for one another and that helps working in A1KP’s team more enjoyable and so you come to work without the shadow of fear and you enjoy coming to work. As a final word, I’d like to say that A1KP is essentially a rarity in an organisation such as this. I don’t want to over-exalt him but certainly in an organisation like this more of A1KPs would be great! That is a real compliment which comes down to his genuine care and respect of people which is one of his key traits.”

This narrative by A1CW2 provided not just additional perspective on the key participant, but perhaps more importantly this particular narrative provided a deep level of context to the organisation to which they all belong to. He provided various evidence of the underlying tacit and subtle nuances and value shades within the organisational structures and systems providing lucid clues on the organisational values that drives the larger organisational culture.

6.4.1.4c Narrative with A1CW3

This participant worked as A1KPs peer for almost 12 months in the Leadership team. In her own words to describe A1KP, she responds:

“Generally where does one’s personal values versus spiritual value start and finish, is hard to tell, and I haven’t had any conversations with A1KP whether he was religious or spiritual but he is one of the most strongly value-based person I know. He’s personal integrity is incredibly high - that would be my first observation of him. I’ve seen his consideration of people and his impact on people. So in his decision-making he thinks

things thru not to upset anyone and he considers his impact on someone. He does that a lot more than anyone else here. He is incredibly empathetic and I think he generally just cares about people full-stop. You can see that in a lot of the decisions he makes every day. Also some of the things he struggles with, they all got to do with his care of people and not wanting to upset people and so from that perspective, I've seen a lot of examples of things he has done. The empathy for people that he displays is both your greatest strength and your greatest weakness too."

A1CW3 attest that A1KP's empathy for people is both his greatest strength and greatest weakness too as he can struggle when comes to delivering bad news or making tough decisions that impact on others.

"In business and life sometimes, difficult decisions need to be made, for example in a closure of projects and people might lose their jobs, that may be the business reality, but the way in which that is managed or handled can be done with the most utmost integrity and consideration. So I think that empathetic people may struggle in those circumstances but they are the best people to deliver the bad news, so for a person like A1KP, if he had to sack someone, he would do it tougher than anyone, but I know that he will give the consideration and give the person the support and deliver the message in the best way. So I think a caring person is always going to feel it but at the same time you also have the greater capacity to handle that sort of delicate situations. He has got the skills and the coping mechanism to be able to do those difficult things. He is pretty unique."

Here A1CW3 implies that A1KP's long experience working in this organisation has given him the conscious resolve not to succumb to negative aspects of the organisation but determined to develop a new more conducive culture through his area of influence and expertise.

"My perception of him is that he has been around a lot in this organisation and he is has probably seen the good, the bad and the ugly and he has made a conscious decision not to follow some of the bad paths and he has found an opportunity within the space that he is in now to express the things that he truly believes. He's got to the point where he is not prepared to work in a culture that does not support his values and he has found the space and opportunity to be part of the development of a culture he wants to see. There is a window of opportunity within this environment for him to do that although the bank has still a long way to go but there are pockets and areas within the bank where he probably don't want to be in, but certainly there are opportunities where his kind of values are

being valued in some sectors of the bank and the environment he is in now, is conducive to what he wants to achieve...” (see Appendix 6.4.1.4c for full excerpt)

When asked if the environment in the bank had allowed the key participant to be more of himself and more authentic, this participant responded in the affirmative saying;

“People like that can also influence the environment. So if you get enough of the AIKPs in an organisation and certainly the area that he and I are in, is a little step ahead in influencing the culture, in being more authentic and genuine, whereas there are other parts of the business that are yet to catch up.”

When asked if she had similar values to AIKP, she says;

“There are a lot of things to AIKP that I’d go ‘I wish I was that good as him’. His integrity is really honourable and I really admire him for that. I can relate to him on many levels. I think he wants to make a difference on many levels and I think, I’m the same way. I’m not the sort of person who has a career and goes home and has another life, and for me work has to be 100% aligned to what I believe in and how I can make a contribution in this life that I have. I couldn’t get out of bed in the morning just to go to a job, just to get a pay check. I know that when AIKP was not able to find purpose and meaning in his work that was when he disengage. AIKP has often shared some of his bad experiences and it is often the bad things that occur that give you the greater guidance and I’ve certainly had plenty of conversations with him around times that were dark or things that had happened that he had found to be really confronting and challenged his values and believes...” (See Appendix 4.6.1.4c for full excerpt)

When asked to provide some specific examples or incidences that displayed the values of the key participant, A1CW3 ventured to provide an example from that same day.

“We have a senior leadership development program in which we select only twenty five people from a list of fifty or sixty people who apply that we interview to attend the program. Four of us do the actual interviewing process and AIKP was helping out with one of the interviews. It is an hour’s interview, going through a series of questions and AIKP was beginning to stress about it and becoming anxious for having to say no to fifty per cent of the people he was interviewing. He didn’t want to upset and hurt them, but he then realised he can give them the best experience of the interview but he was not responsible for the outcome – that they were responsible for it. It is an example of how

much he cares about people. Although some people may view that as a sign of weakness this empathy he has for people and his difficulty in saying no to people, but I see it as a great strength. If you find sacking people easy, than there must be something wrong with you. It must be done with the best ability to give dignity for the person who is at the other end.”

In the following A1CW3 ventures to discuss A1KP’s source of values he displays at work.

She explains:

“A1KP doesn’t openly talk about his religious or spiritual values, but he openly talks about his views and optimism about people, the desire to work together for a greater good, so you can definitely see that in the way he operates and sometimes it’s explicit in the way you need to collaborate with people and he is very good at that, in including people and have a collaborative outcome. When I think about my own context, I think that maybe because he has a religion, and found a set of principles from that.”

When asked if she was religious or spiritual, A1CW3 thinks she is spiritual, and considers why spiritual values are relevant in the workplace, explaining as follows;

“I wouldn’t call myself religious, but I would call myself spiritual, very spiritual actually. I have a greater sense of purpose and always believed in working towards something much bigger, and a sense of my role in wanting to make a difference. I also am quite open to the different theories perhaps more aligned to the Buddhist approach. I meditate; I like some of the principles in Buddhism such as non-attachment and personal accountability for things. Such as you can’t control some of the things said to you, but you can control how you respond to that. That really challenges me and makes me a better person. These relationship matters happen in the office and at home. People don’t park their emotions at the door when they walk into the office, so you have to deal with everything. You have to learn to deal with the person holistically. Companies are realising, particularly from the hours they are demanding from their employees that when employees bring emotions to work - it is not just the negatives but the positives as well, the emotional demand and personal resilience that you require out of your staff to do these jobs, you can’t expect them to separate their selves, and the acknowledgement that people have been bringing their emotional selves to work for many, many years anyway, even if it was not recognised...” (See Appendix 6.4.1.4c for full excerpt)

When she was asked who might be the driver for this positive shift in the bank's environment, she explains, the new CEO has been a catalyst, as he is quite down to earth as she describes how the he is a good role-model for people to be more authentic at work;

“The change in the CEO has really helped drive that change because he is someone who is really authentically genuine who tells a great story, I remember when he first came on board, he was giving his first speech as a CEO, and he shared how his wife asked him to pick the dog up from the vet and he was in a cab, with his dog, writing his first speech – he was just real. People are less afraid to be themselves when you have got someone who is actually role-modelling that and I think people generally sense there is a genuinely good intent in this organisation.”

A1CW1 cautions however that it is difficult to balance ethical sustainable principles with pursuit of short term goals, but she is fairly optimistic that there are conversations taking place around such difficult subjects;

“It is just very hard when the deliverables you need to make can sometimes be contrary to being real. There is a real challenge with balancing sustainable ethical values with short-term profit drives, but these sorts of conversations are happening now when they had never happened before, so there is a maturity in the organisation that allowing those kind of challenging conversations to take place.”

A1CW3's final word on M1KP splendidly captures what a spiritually inspired person brings to the workplace and indeed everywhere he goes:

“As a final word, I can see that AIKP lives up to a Christian value or belief. He is however not rigid in that either. He is an incredibly unique individual and he is really selfless and in the past roles he is one who has struggled a lot and he is at a point in his life where the clarity is coming through and there is a great opportunity for him to crack open who he is and what is the next bigger purpose for him. I feel he is in a bit of a turning point and I think he is no longer constrained by some of the things he was constrained by in the past and I, 'd just love to see him find what he is looking for and I think he is an amazing person with a lot to offer. In a nutshell I would describe AIKP as spiritual. There is definitely something there. He is a good human being.”

This narrative with A1CW3 provided further insight into how the key participant operates and how he personally impacts others with his capacity for empathy and ability to deliver difficult news in a caring supportive way within the workplace and earn the admiration of his peers for his unique skill and humaneness. The final word in this narrative on A1KP captures what it truly means to be spiritual. A spiritual person ultimately is a good human being, who through his deep compassion, inspire others who are inevitably drawn to his unique humanness. This is due to the fact that each individual consciously or unconsciously have the same life spirit waiting to be known within themselves and others cannot avoid to innately recognise this dormant quality within when displayed and expressed by an individual who has evolved his noble spiritual qualities.

6.4.1.4d Narrative with A1CW4

This interview with the former boss of the key participant, who is now retired from the banking industry, was conducted in a café..A1CW4 had a very long career starting at the age of 16 as an apprentice in a bank in Queensland, arriving in Melbourne to work with the branch in Melbourne at age 30, and hence has a huge wealth of experience rising through rank and file through the many eras of several banks, including overseas banks, in the USA. The key participant, A1KP had worked under the supervision and guidance this former boss in a senior role, for over four years until A1CW4's retirement.

“When I was his boss, I saw great potential in A1KP, but he himself lacked some self-confidence, but he had a lot of good ideas and we worked really well together and I used to support him with whatever authority I had to bring forth his ideas and we achieved very good things together. By the time I left my role, he was very successful. I left the bank because I didn't have any faith in the people I was reporting to at that time. A1KP has done well because typically people who rise in the bank through rank and file typically follow a particular path, and although he took some jobs that didn't suit his personality, he has done well in getting to where he really should be at. There were difficult times,

because they were bringing in a lot of senior people from outside armed with MBAs and all that and he had to adjust to that despite his track record of working loyally within the same bank. Due to that he missed some really good opportunities but he stuck with it and has done well... ” (See Appendix 4.6.1.4d for full excerpt)

The interview with this former boss to the key participant provided a lot of background information and contextual information about the highly political nature of the banking sector and the dark side of the banking industry over the history of several leadership eras, given his long career starting in his teenage years, right up to his sixties when he retired..A1CW4 saw A1KP as a young rising star with huge potential, who experienced many challenges in a culture that was not entirely conducive for his career development. He informs that A1KP’s interactions with their informal group helped him to learn the ropes of the trade and he is extremely proud of his former staff’s achievements after he himself had left the bank. He admires A1KP for his resilience to remain in the culture of the bank without losing any of his own personal integrity where the environment can get the better of less resilient personalities to either succumb to the system or become damaged in their sense of self or lose their morale.

“... most of the bad things that happened at the bank was due to the culture of poor values, where there was almost a tribe like culture, a gloating of how only the strong will survive in our system. A1KP at that time did not have the confidence or the maturity to handle the politics of that era, but he has done well under the circumstances and the fact that he is much older now and has moved to a very important job within the system is a huge credit to his ability to play the game well....of course he could have been more successful if he had taken a more traditional career path, because he was highly capable, but that would have meant the material extrinsic success and prestige that many in the banking industry are after.”

This former boss to A1KP verifies views by others that the bank has had a long history of poor values and suggests that A1KP had to make personal sacrifices since he had refused to worry about his own prestige and material extrinsic success like many others who work in the banking sector.

“AIKP had deeper guiding principles and sought to live by his own definition of success. But he was always interested in the strategies of developing people and that in the long term is a good strategy to be a good contender to rise through the system with integrity. AIKP adjusted well by learning from his seniors and he looked at ways to develop others and be successful in the non-ambitious but value-driven style, which eventually has paid off for him. Looking around the room then, AIKP was the youngest but he showed great potential even then. I had my own religious values but I do not use those overt spiritual or religious languages, I just believed in doing the right thing and being honest and staying true to my values and perhaps AIKP has a similar style of leadership despite having profound personal values...” (See Appendix 4.6.1.4d for full excerpt)

This former boss took pride in the achievements of his former employee who has risen through the ranks of the bank despite what he describes as a notoriously political and sometimes morale damaging system of the banking industry. However, he does qualify that times are changing and banks had to change their old systems to adapt to the changing societal demands for more ethical and sustainable banking products and services.

6.4.1.4e Narrative with A1CW5

This narrative with A1CW5 represents the perceptions of the key participant’s current boss, who prefers to be referred to as a People Leader. AIKP has worked with her for about a year. In the following narrative she explains how AIKP came to his current role, in her Human Resources area in the Organisational Capability division.

“I was approached by AIKP’s former boss suggesting to me that he would be a good person to work in my HR area and soon after AIKP approached me directly and we had a conversation, and took us about 3 months to work out whether we can find something for him in our business area. I’ve been running the Organisational Capability division for about 18 months, but I’ve been in a HR role for five years prior to that. AIKP operates from a very strong value set – he is not an individual who would compromise how he feels based on his values or principles. He is also very high on empathy, so he is almost viewed almost as the “Wise Counsel” and my team would talk to him because I know he has a very strong element of integrity, he is very open and honest and he never ever betrays the trust of people. He is very emotive in that regard. His language can be somewhat self-

deprecating not in the way of being hard on himself, but he comes from a strong sense of 'it is a privilege that I'm working in the Academy' when I'd say, we hired you for your ability, so stop thanking us for it. So his gratitude has sometimes led him to consider doing things that he doesn't really want to do. Good example is that he doesn't like administration, but when I first came back from my maternity leave, there were a few hot-spots and I asked him if he can handle them and he agreed to. Later when I asked him if he enjoyed that role he said No but explained that he felt he couldn't say no to me, due to his sense of gratitude that I had given him that opportunity. So we had to re-frame and clarify that he need not compromise on staying true to what he truly likes to do. So sometimes his sense of privilege and gratitude can cloud his conscious decisions at work."

This narrative above by A1KP's immediate boss, also highlights and confirms the information that A1KP's self-disclosure recorded. It testifies that A1KP has a very honest and modest disposition. However his humility is recognised as his strength even though at times, his deep gratitude for his current role prevents him from speaking up against projects he was not really keen to do. However his ability to be emotive and empathetic with a strong value set makes him a valuable member of this team who approach him as the "wise-counsel" due to his high integrity.

"My view about maturing and am a believer of the whole self to work philosophy and I don't think it is healthy to have a different side to you socially to what you are at work. Who you are as an individual and that links to your values, beliefs and spiritual self is important to be conscious of, but I know a lot of people aren't. I am conscious of using that as part of your brand and what you stand for and I'm also quite intuitive to that. This organisation has taken strides to nurture the whole person and there are opportunities for strongly emotive individuals like A1KP to thrive in their careers in sync with their own personal values, but the only caveat to that would be that there are many sub-cultures within this organisation so some may be ahead and others, behind on that call."

In this narrative above, A1CW5 recognises the importance of nurturing the whole person at work, giving mention to spiritual dimension as one of the integrated dimensions of all individuals. She suggests that due to this, A1KP has a great opportunity to synchronise his personal value systems to thrive in his current role.

“The culture that AIKP is in now, is perhaps more conducive to him exploring and trying out some different career choices and how he applies his own values through the work he does...In fairness to our senior executives, some of our more leftist things we do in our Leadership programs have always been supported by the top-leadership of this organisation. In our view, the only way to create true leadership change is to hit at the beliefs and value level...So we try to take people out of their generally privileged environments and help them see leadership through a different lens, whether it is indigenous issues or issues of sustainability, homelessness, whatever might be, to explore leadership at one’s own personal values response to acquire a true lens on what does it mean for an individual to be a true leader in our bank...When they do a deep dive from all those different angles, we get them to look at it from a values level, principles level, belief level etc., by first looking at how it relates to yourself, before linking back to our own organisation....It can be really hard to give a tangible outcome especially to our bankers who are used to facts and figures...I can say we are successful by the way in which we really push people out of their comfort zones, but we do that in a well-supported environment and that is what brings them to the values, belief level...” (See Appendix 6.4.1.4e for full excerpt)

This part of her narrative provided a glimpse into the progressive leadership development efforts at this bank for a more sustainable business practice for the future and this came as a surprise as one might be forgiven to think that banks are only into bottom-line money matters and to see them make a profound investment on the soft management skills at the senior leadership level of the bank appeared promising. When asked to comment on AIKP’s specific role in her team, she explains:

“AIKP plays sort of a floating role, so some days he will be facilitating, other days some coaching, he might be called in to draw from his wealth of knowledge and experience from his past business roles for curriculum design. We can bring him in to plug him anywhere we truly need his skills and presence, and it has worked incredibly well. His scorecard is pretty loose, but his main roles are in the facilitation, the consultation and the coaching areas.”

When asked about whether she thought about AIKPs values, she said:

“I’ve never had deep long conversations with him about his values, but I have thought about it for sure and I have learnt about it in pockets rather than through long conversation with him...I was more concerned with his openness and ability to be consistent with his empathy and he has a lot of runway, in terms of pushing and provoking people if he needs to, but he doesn’t push that boundary that much...if we were to mention the word spirituality in here, phew...all the shutters will come up and most people will go, ‘I didn’t know you were religious?’ or they would see it as the quite hippy alternative piece or take on spirituality.”

Here A1CW5 provides further evidence on the resistance to religious or spiritual connotations in the Australian work environment.

“Personally I am not religious but spiritual and I would believe in a higher order of some sort and that your spirituality is the very core of you. I grew up in a loose religion and I’m kind of cool with that. But I would describe A1KP as spiritual and I won’t be surprised if he has a religious family background. I find it refreshing to have a person like A1KP to work for me but I think you need to be able to be comfortable to be able to work with someone like him, if you weren’t, you can struggle on what platform you can add value to someone like him. Some people might be quite threatened by the fact that he seems to have a strong sense of self. So from that front it is quite unusual sort of relationship. Someone lesser can find him quite confronting. My final word on him is just that he is a good guy and very valuable to our team.”

In her final words A1CW5 reveals the stiff upper lip attitude on the concepts of spirituality and religiosity common to Western workplaces, yet she also provided ample evidence to suggest an appreciation and acceptance of A1KP’s values being “quietly known” to be spiritually inclined. She however warns that someone lesser (who lacks a spiritual appreciation) may find A1KPs style quite confronting.

6.4.2 Data Interpretation of Case Study A1

The Australian case study presented a different view of a spiritually inclined leader from the Western cohort in that despite being deeply spiritual, there was a clear and distinct effort to avoid the language of spirituality or religion at work. The need and subtle pressure to uphold and

maintain a secular work environment seem to be important in the Australian case study. Nevertheless the positive impacts of working with a leader with spiritually inspired values did come through from the many interviews conducted with the key participant's (AIKP's) work colleagues, some who had reported to him directly in a supervisor subordinate relationship, others who worked with him as peers and two of the co-workers interviewed held a senior supervisory role. Thus, the Australian case provided a multidimensional view of a variety of work relationships of the key participant at work. Key analysis of findings from this case-study will be discussed in the following chapter.

6.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter provided evidence through narratives from three completed case-studies. Two business leaders, from Malaysia who participated, owned their own small to medium enterprises. The business leader from the Western cohort had worked for more than 25 years at one of the four major banks in Australia, carrying with him a wealth of experience in many different business roles over his long career at the same bank. The key participant in the Australian case currently works within the Leadership Academy of the bank where he leads and functions within project teams to execute leadership development and advancements programs for senior managerial executives of the bank. Both The Malaysian and Australian case-studies involved on-site narrative interviews with the key participant and their colleagues at work, narrative interviews with members of their families and on several occasions involved off-site observations with the key participants, both in formal or informal settings. The Case-studies revealed very important and sometimes highly political and sensitive data that was recorded and analysed to capture the overall values and impact a spiritually inspired leader brings to the workplace. These factors which are highlighted through chosen narratives in this chapter will be categorised and analysed to be presented in Chapter 7, to arrive at a deep understanding of how the tacit

dimensions of spirituality manifest to influence workplace values, relationships and behaviour to enhance the workplace experience for all concerned. Various examples from the narratives in this chapter highlight the wisdom, compassion, humility and integrity of the three key participants. Their unique decision-making or management styles, has been honed through their expanded spiritual consciousness, having reconciled and learnt through their own life experiences. They appear to have honed a personal style of subtle equanimity and skill that many colleagues at work testified, as rare qualities that they admire, appreciate and respect because of the way it impacts them positively at work.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION: A CREATIVE SYNTHESIS

If wealth has to become well-being, you need a spiritual element within you. If there is no inner dimension in you, your very success will work against you.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is designed to arrive at a composite depiction of this research topic on spirituality in the workplace bringing together findings from Phase I and II. It presents both unobservable tacit knowledge and observable phenomena, from a variety of data sources. The research had two objectives, seen from a Malaysian (Eastern) and Australian (Western) context as follows:

1. To establish if there was awareness and use of tacit spiritual values that promotes greater meaning, purpose and motivation and worker satisfaction at the workplace.
2. To propose an effective model for transformation of work place environment based on a socio-spiritual paradigm.

These objectives spurred the four research questions (RQs). The first research question sought to establish how aware business leaders were of their own spiritual beliefs and values as follows:

RQ1. How aware are key managers/leaders of their own spiritual beliefs and values?

Section 7.2 discusses the key findings for RQ1. In answering RQ1 the study presents the findings to establish how and why individuals become spiritually inspired business leaders. Discussion relating to the three remaining RQs is presented in Section 7.3 onwards. These questions are:

RQ2. What are some of the workplace value systems observed among organisational members?

RQ3. What are some of the spiritual dimensions observed/practiced in the workplace?

RQ4. To what degree have spiritual dimensions influenced and/or enhanced workplace behaviour and activity.

RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4 highlight how these business leaders' impact and influence colleagues and peers, in their respective organisations. The study is presented to contrast findings from an Eastern and Western perspective. Underpinning the discussion is the use of the heuristic process to analyse the four research questions. The previous three chapters presented the findings of data collected from Phase I and Phase II.

As depicted in Figure 7.1, Phase I (Chapter 4) analysed the research questions from a single dimensional viewpoint from a total of 12 business leaders from Malaysia and Australia.

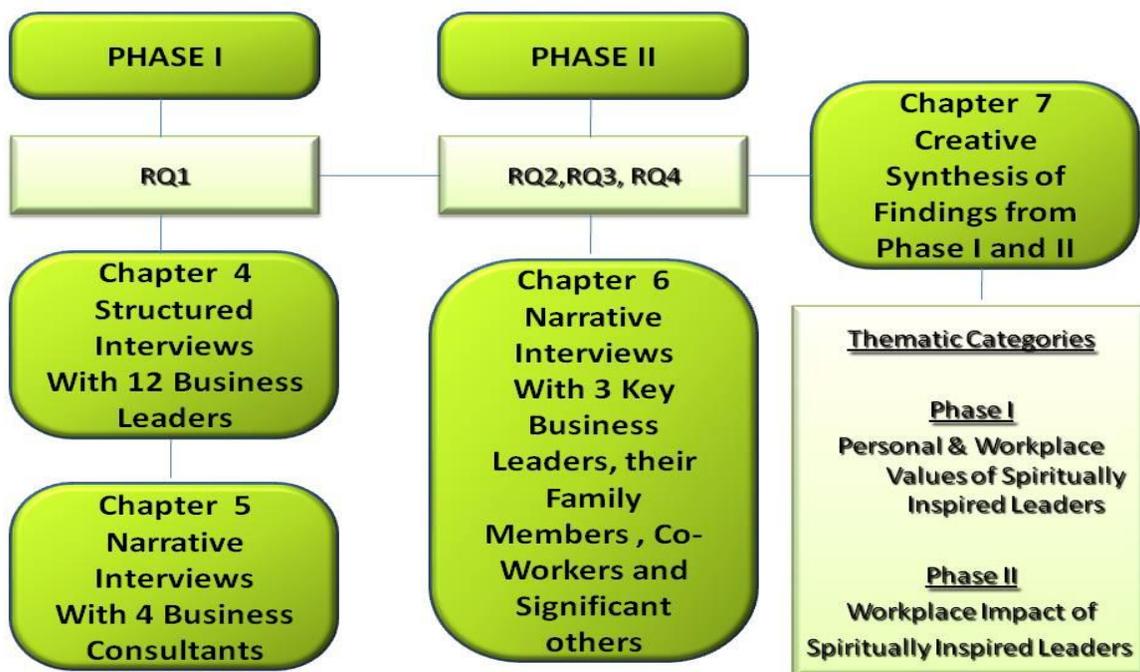


Figure 7.1 Outline of Chapter Seven

In chapter 5 these findings were augmented by views from four independent business management consultants from the two countries. In Phase II (Chapter 6) three in-depth case-studies were completed (two case-studies representing the Eastern culture and one from the Western culture), closely observing and analysing the phenomenon from a multi-dimensional perspective, involving a variety of individuals closely associated with the three key informants who were all respected key leaders within their business enterprises. This included close family members, co-workers such as colleagues, subordinates, superiors, and relevant other stakeholders from the larger community.

7.1.2 The final creative synthesis stage of heuristics

This exploratory research adopted the heuristic approach which facilitates the inquiry of tacit intuitive awareness of the research participants and the three key subjects which combined with the researcher's own heuristic processes involving a total of almost ten years of "*initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, and explication*" culminating in the final stage of "*creative synthesis*". This six stage Heuristic process is described at length in the methodology chapter and a summary is depicted in Figure 7.2. In heuristics stage one, the researcher formulates research questions which are of profound personal interest. By stage two through a process called immersion, the researcher through an extensive literature review and an organic process of gathering information on the topic of study begin to further crystallise the research questions.

Stage 1 Initial Engagement	Stage 2 Immersion	Stage 3 Incubation	Stage 4 Illumination	Stage 5 Explication	Stage 6 Creative Synthesis
Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 3	Chapter 4 &5	Chapter 7 & 8
RQ Formulation	Literature Review	Methodology	Methodology	Interviews	Case-Studies & Findings
Heuristic inquiry begins with the internal search to discover a “question that is strongly connected to one’s own identity and selfhood” (Moustakas, 1990, p.40)	Moustakas (1990) recommends a process of immersion in the topic to discover meanings in everyday observations, conversations and published works.	During this time the researcher retreats from intense, concentrated, conscious focus on the question and allows the inner tacit dimension to wrestle with the new input gained during immersion (Sela-Smith, 2002).	This fourth phase begins as soon as the inner work of Phase 3 ends, revealing new experiences, new interpretations, new meanings or it may correct distorted understandings (Sela-Smith, 2002).	In this phase of explication, a heuristics researcher attends to their own awareness, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and judgements as a prelude to the understanding that is derived from conversations and dialogues with others (Moustakas, 1990).	“Creative synthesis can only be achieved through tacit and intuitive powers” (Moustakas 1990,p. 31). Creative synthesis enables the researcher to synthesise and bring together as a whole an individual’s story that reveals some new whole.

Figure 7.2 Outcomes of the Six Stages of Heuristics

The third stage of the heuristic methodology is unique and curious in that it demands the researcher to consciously distance from active and conscious involvement in the research question. In this incubatory heuristic stage, the researcher needs to allow for a process of inner reflection and reconciliation with consistent or conflicting views of data gathered in the previous immersion stage. It is a stage in the heuristics process where the researcher makes a deliberate effort to retain an internal tacit focus. This was achieved in an eight month period of isolated retreat at an ashram in India. At the end of the first three stages, the preliminary preparation of designing an effective and feasible research project was concluded.

The next two stages in heuristics is the fieldwork process, where through the stages of illumination and explication, the researcher is obtaining in-depth understanding of the

phenomenon. Here the researcher interprets data collected through interviews and conversations with research subjects and at all times reconciling with the researcher's own tacit awareness of the research subject. A rich tapestry of information gathered from multiple lenses is then woven together to form a composite understanding of the research phenomenon. At the grand finale called creative synthesis, the researcher, "as a scientist-artist, develops an aesthetic rendition of the themes and essential meaning of the phenomenon" (Moustakas, 1990, p.52). An exceptional distinction of the heuristic process is that it requires the researcher to astutely synthesize the various insights drawn from the six stages, to arrive at a complete representation and understanding of a diverse range of information to form a uniformed idea of knowledge without undue generalisation. The challenges of dealing with such a subtle subject would have been quite insurmountable if a more clinical research approach had been employed.

The Heuristics method required the researcher to explore and trek through the trenches along with her research subjects into their inner worldviews of complicated alleys and pathways to emerge with some understanding of a dimension which is for the most part private or even elusive to their own comprehension. Often for the subjects, articulating on this tacit subject matter puts them on the spot, when the research calls for an inward process of introspection to identify a core source, to explain the values that drive their outward personalities. For most of the research subjects, this integral part of who they are in their core personalities was not necessarily easy to investigate and articulate upon. It is the area of their lives which often times is taken for granted or assumed to exist without any need for questioning or explication. However, this research required them to do exactly that.

Thus to ensure a level of mutual trust, to explore this subject matter with any integrity, the researcher needed to engage in her own genuine personal spiritual journey to understand and relate to her research subjects. This was done in this heuristics research process during the third

stage of Incubation. By virtue, the heuristic process includes empirical observable phenomenon, but perhaps more essentially it allows for the capture of various tacit contemplative and internal intuitive knowledge (of both researcher and the research subjects). Thus an essential contribution of this research is in providing a potential look into the hidden inner world of the personalities being studied. It is widely accepted that the external actions of individuals is regulated by the state of their inner selves. In each individual, this inner self is marked by layers of complexity, in an intricate web of their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual experiences and states. This study aimed to look into the deepest dimension. Also referred as spiritual intelligence (Vaughan, 2002), the inner-most spiritual dimension is most elusive to scientific study but is widely understood in many cultures to be the source of all external manifestations. To the extent a subject holds awareness of this inner spiritual dimension as an integral part of their inner self, to that extent their external engagements seem to reflect and display a certain flow, grace and wisdom which is at once captivating and inspiring.

It is the aim of this chapter to present what makes a spiritually inspired individual dynamic, influential and wise, both in their actions and presence. This study presents the evidence and analysis of how subtle spiritual notes within the interiority of the individual, guides their actions and behaviours in their external activities as depicted in Figure 7.3 below. Here, the study primarily focused on their work engagements but inevitably also exposed other areas of their lives including their family life as well as giving evidence on other extended social roles they play. Starting with the key participants themselves, the following section addresses the first research question that sought to establish the level of awareness these business leaders had of their own internally held spiritual beliefs and values.

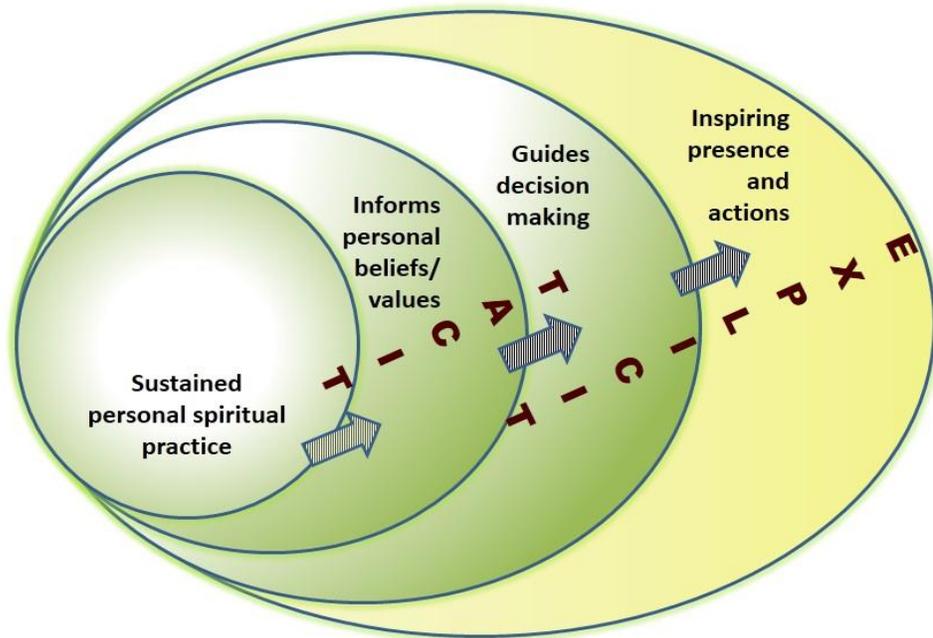


Figure 7.3 Tacit Inner and Explicit Outer Interface

7.2 CONSCIOUS LEADERS IN BUSINESS (RQ1)

RQ1 sought to establish how aware key leaders were of their own spiritual belief and values. This question was answered with in-depth analysis of the following:

- Understanding spirituality as a state of being (noun) and as a process (verb)
- Examining how spiritual values were formed and sustained
- Examining the influence and impact of intrinsic spiritual values on extrinsic engagement at work (particularly in challenging and sometimes corrupt business environments)
- Contrasting the expression of spirituality and/or religiosity in Eastern and Western viewpoints.
- Examining how spiritually-inspired leaders balanced their inner-outer awareness.

- Exploring why spiritually-inspired leaders made better leaders.

This research sought out business leaders with a heightened sense of spiritual awareness and who were engaged in an internal spiritual process within themselves through a variety of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices. The aim of the research was to consider if a spiritual belief, practice or value held tacitly within a business leader helps them manage, and be more effective in coping with the challenges of the current business climates. Since the criteria for selection of all participants for this research had involved a purposive sampling method to ensure that all participants had some measure of spiritual awareness, it was a given that the participants were able to relate to the concept of being spiritual or to the question of being more conscious human beings.

This was tested by posing the question “How would you define spirituality?” to all respondents in Phase 1 and key respondents who were selected to participate in Phase 2. The literature discussion on “defining spirituality” in Section 2.5 and the discussion on “Why the preference for spirituality over religion” in Section 2.5.3, in Chapter two, indicates that research respondents may adopt any of two viewpoints. Firstly, they can adopt the view that spirituality is different to religiosity. On the other hand, they can adopt the second more symbiotic viewpoint, where they perceive spirituality to exist within religious structures or conversely religion exist to support spiritual frameworks.

The results clearly confirms that the second more symbiotic view on spirituality versus religion was more overtly evident in findings from the Eastern cohort whilst the Western cohort, generally preferred to distance themselves from religious association for several reasons as depicted in various participants’ excerpts in Sections 4.6.2.1 through to 4.6.4 in Chapter 4. This attempt to de-link spirituality from religiosity amongst the Western cohort to maintain a secular environment was a mere pragmatic consideration deemed necessary to avoid any religious

sensitivity at the workplace. However, it may not reflect a participant's true private stand on the subject. This is evident as even among a good number of Western subjects such as DMH, JE(M), JE(F), AB,RH (see Profile of Australian Participants in Table 4.2, p.106) in Phase 1, and A1KP, A1F1, A1CW2, A1CW4 (see Profile of Participants in Table 6.3 p.235) in Phase 2, all of whom indicated a mild to keen interest and/or participation in religious traditions evidently suggest that religiosity was also a guiding structure in many of the Western participants, despite their conscious effort to refrain from their over-explicit expressions at the workplace. It can be argued here that the difficulty of defining spirituality within or without religious frameworks is not merely a matter of subjective interpretation depending on social-cultural/religious influences on an individual. Beyond these conscious surface level social complexities, spirituality remains an existential question to individuals, thus the definition by Heelas (2002) that "spirituality=life=spirituality=life" discussed at length in Section 2.5.1 in Chapter 2 becomes a relevant question to one and all. What appears to differ is its expression within one individual to the next based on their degree of awareness on the matter.

Those who develop a keen awareness of their "inner-world", pursued consciously through regular practice of tacit inner reflection via religious or other forms of spiritual constructions, appear to influence key participants with a quality of equanimity achieved through a gradual process of inner refinement. Various examples have been cited by key participants themselves and their co-workers when relating how these business leaders respond, particularly in stressful instances or chaotic work conditions in the case-studies discussions in Chapter 6. One important incident obtained via the technique of participant observation in the field occurred when the researcher was interviewing M2KP and her co-workers in her office (see p. 218). What ensued on that occasion was direct observation of an intense moment of "a day in the life of a business

leader” where the researcher was fortunate enough to capture first-hand the quality of a leader who was anchored firmly on a spiritual core within.

An active inner tacit process within spiritually inspired individuals normally sustains their outer strength by drawing from an inner spiritual core through a variety of spiritual practice. This inner spiritual source, for the most part, defines the nature of their respective outer engagements. This inner spiritual core state is often described in a variety of lexicon such as spiritual awareness, pure consciousness, mindfulness, enlightenment, self-realisation, liberation, the higher power, transcendence, emancipation and many other custom or culture dependent terminologies (Kriger & Seng, 2005; Neck, & Milliman, 1994; Allinson, 1989). This inner core spiritual state is in turn sustained through a variety of spiritual (new age/meditative) or religious (traditional/prayer) processes.

Although the positivistic methodologies held dominance for a long time and thus the preoccupations with measurement scales and rationalistic designs and this is evident also in the study of spirituality as it pertains to work. The literature provides evidence of scholars making utilitarian links between the infinite subject of spirituality to finite measures of productivity, organisational performance or outcome (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000, Kolodinsky, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2008). Fornaciari and Dean (2001) highlight that both organizational leaders and scholars, have a new responsibility to be willing to accept “evidence” about the phenomenon of spirituality at work based on non-positivist ways of knowing, including ethno methodological techniques, qualitative techniques, and even tradition-based stories. Fornaciari and Dean (2001) cited Harman (1994) who reinforce the need to accept non-traditional ways to consider a new “science of wholeness” One that is built upon an “assumption of oneness, unity, interconnectedness of everything; and an epistemological assumption that there are two available

`windows' onto reality, namely the objective, through the physical senses, and the subjective, through the intuitive and aesthetic faculties” (Harman, 1994, pp. 379-80).

Figure 7.4 depicts the interconnectedness and interdependence of the various human dimensions within individuals. This study posits that spiritually-inspired leaders are anchored in a tacit imperceptible spiritual core which influences and informs their thoughts and feelings as well as their behaviour and actions in the physical, psychological and social dimensions. The findings in this study indicate that this inner tacit spiritual state and processes appear to sustain and influence every aspect of an individual’s outer extrinsic existence and engagement.

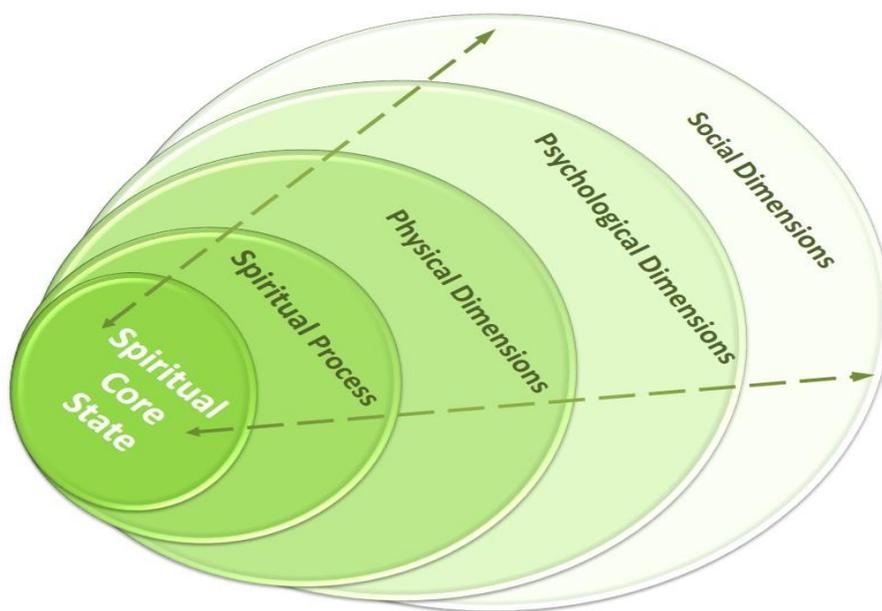


Figure 7.4 Interconnectedness of Human Dimensions Anchored on a Spiritual Core

Chapter 4 describes at length these inner core beliefs and practices by the participants in Phase I. The final section in Chapter 4 provides the answer to RQ1, establishing that participants from both the Eastern and Western cohort had a strong awareness of spiritual beliefs and values through their own unique bio-socio-cultural inheritance. Their unique life-long personal experience through the process of enculturation influenced their deep perceptions of life. This occurs through a complex combination of socialisation patterns right from their childhood

through adulthood experiences. It provides each individual with a unique personality and a personally defined worldview. It is important to note that for each individual, as they gather more experiences in their personal lives, their standpoint on the sensitive subject of spirituality and/or religiosity concomitantly evolves along with their accumulated experiences, suggesting a dynamic rather than inactive inner process.

Fundamentally, spirituality for an individual deals with the big question of “Why” his or her existence, pursued through a conscious process of inner reflection and expansion of the self. According to Ashforth & Pratt (2003), as a process, spirituality is an end in itself (as it does not require completion) yet many seekers of spirituality seek the so-called end state, which is to do with an intangible tacit goal of transcendence. This state of being, has been described in many different traditions with imperceptible words, such as Enlightenment, Self-actualisation, Self-realisation, Oneness, Truth, Awakening, Nirvana and so forth. The findings from this study confirm that each individual conceptualises spirituality based on their very own unique inherited tradition (unconsciously) or through a rational (conscious) process of adopting a tradition of their personal choice (See discussions in Section 4.5.1.2 in Chapter 4).

This leads to the question of how far this imperceptible inner state or process matters within the lives of these research subjects and how does it impact the lives of other individuals they engage with, particularly in their respective business organisations? Levy (2000) sums it up by concluding “spirituality has a very important role in the professional life of a business leader” (p.129). He describes this spiritual consciousness as “the quiet zone that transcends outside inputs and can give us strength and direction, a quiet zone that helps us overcome our ever present weaknesses, biases and fears” (p.130). To use an analogy to explain this phenomenon, a nuclear-scientist would readily admit that an atom or energy is directly imperceptible, and yet the effect of energy on matter is perceptible and widely accepted. Similarly, the spiritual state or process

within an individual is not necessarily perceptible, but certainly one can observe an individual's spiritual expression and observe the resultant effect of this tacit dimension through their interactions and impact on others.

The findings in Phase II (which will be discussed from Section 7.3 onwards) of this research lends support to Levy's (2000) opinion, suggesting a link exists between an individual's tacit spiritual values and the roles they play as business leaders in their respective organisations. The influence of this inner tacit dimension is explored through their extrinsic manifestations. This interdependent relationship of the tacit dimension on extrinsic dimensions is depicted in Figures 7.3 and 7.4. There is sufficient evidence from the research to suggest that the inner tacit dimension of spiritually inspired individuals inform the deeply held personal belief and value systems of these research participants (see Section 5.4 in Chapter 5 and self-disclosures of key participants in Sections 6.3.1.2, 6.3.3.2 and 6.3.4.1 in Chapter 6). This, in turn, guides all external actions and decision-making in a spirit of inclusive awareness resulting in an inspiring presence and action by the spiritually inspired leader as depicted in Figure 7.3. The same diagram also illustrates how through a sustained spiritual practice an individual's internally held belief and value system is developed. This tacit dimension in turn guides all external actions and decision-making, leading to a conscious state of considerate inclusive presence which appears to inspire others in the organisation. This state of inclusiveness that results is examined and validated in this research by the narrative accounts gathered from co-workers of the spiritually-inspired leaders (see narratives by co-workers in Sections 6.3.1.4, 6.3.3.4 and 6.4.4.4 in Chapter 6). The comments recorded from co-workers display a high degree of trust towards these key leaders, trusting in their fairness and their judgements. This was so even in cases when they disagreed with any given decision taken by the leader (as relayed by co-worker in section 6.3.14b in Chapter 6), yet their sense of trust and loyalty towards these leaders appear to remain firm. Thus,

the concept of inclusive presence is derived from the idea that spiritually-inspired leaders are able to create an atmosphere of trust and sense of belonging among their colleagues because no one is made to feel excluded. Instead, there is a comradeship that appears to come from the uniting spirit of trust that is felt towards their spiritually inspired leader, often seen as someone who has everyone's best interest at heart, even in their absence. The question of trust in workplace relationships will be analysed in further depth in the later sections of this Chapter when Phase II results are scrutinised.

Leaders by default find themselves in positions of responsibility and power over others. Thus, whether these leaders lead small family-owned businesses or large multinational corporations, every thought, emotion and action of these leaders communicate a certain message that could potentially impact millions of people in the globalised economies of today. In creating world class global firms, Brake (1997) suggest leaders need to build global skills which he presents in his "global leadership triad" model constituting three main characteristics: 1) relationship management, 2) business acumen and 3) personal effectiveness. This research has added to this understanding by zoning in on the centre of Brake's triad which he calls the "transformational self" or the "drive towards meaning and purpose through activity strengthened by reflection, personal mind management and openness to change (1997, p.44). However, this central inner "transformational self" is presented as the "spiritual core" supported by spiritual practices in this research (see Figure 7.4).

Leaders need to be physically fit, cognitively alert, emotionally balanced and spiritually aware for them to be inclusive and compassionate towards the multitude and often conflicting needs of people and planet they can potentially impact. Thus this research ventured to analyse closely the world of business leaders who by their own admission and confirmation by others in their lives, claim to be firmly anchored in an inner tacit spiritual core either through explicit or

silent regular practice or acts of devotion to see how it translated in their behaviour and actions in the workplace. It appears that it provides them with an inner sense of balance and calm, particularly when making minor or major decisions at the workplace. They attest that without this spiritual anchor, they can easily succumb to experiences of inner dissonance, feelings of unrest and discontentment which typically is reported to be the causes of psychological exhaustion and burnout amongst executives and employees, creating toxic environments at work. The business world is often tarnished by reports and evidence of corporate fraud, (Povel, Singh & Winton 2007; Johnson, Ryan & Tian, 2009; Schroth & Elliot, 2002) executive burnout (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996) and toxic workplaces (Frost, 2003; Gallos, 2008; Goldman, 2009). The reality of dealing with less than ideal and corrupt business environments were also captured in this research.

All three key respondents in Phase II of this research gave evidence on the difficulties of navigating in business terrains in less than ideal conditions. Both key respondents from Malaysia and a few of their co-workers informed about the difficulties of dealing with unfair business practices in a corrupt environment within their respective industry sectors (see Chapter 6: Section 6.3.1.2, Self-Disclosure by M1KP; Section 6.3.1.4a, Narrative with M1CW1; Section 6.3.1.4b, Narrative with M1CW2; Section 6.3.3.2 Self-disclosure by M1KP2; see also Section 6.4.1.4b Narrative by A1CW2 for discussion on checks and balances to prevent fraudulent activities within the banking sector in the Australian case-study). According to Miller and Miller (2008), the two major insights from the 1980's and 1990's is that firstly, having material wealth does not really satisfy the inner yearning to access a deeper meaning and obtain fulfilment in work and life and secondly, the destruction of the earth's resources with international relations still based on "survival of the fittest" (p.5) has been destructive, unjust, and unsustainable. Thus, it is sensible that the idea of creating good corporate citizens is dependent upon the availability of conscious leaders. Thus, in a highly complex and sophisticated globalising world it is reasonable to suggest

that personal mastery on the physical, psychological and social domains require a firm inner tacit mental-psychological anchor. Spiritual practices and belief systems offer individuals the opportunity to explore their own inner tacit domains. In the self-disclosures by the three key participants (see Chapter 6), each cite their spiritual convictions to provide strength and courage to do the right thing when confronted with corrupt or political practices within their industry that challenged their moral codes. On those occasions, these leaders had displayed strength of character by making unpopular decisions or decisions that called for personal sacrifice while maintaining an inner resilience, keeping an optimistic attitude for the future, without becoming totally demoralized in the face of unfair adversity. Their integrity in dealing with less than ideal circumstances was also a source of admiration and loyalty with their work colleagues. This will be explored further in Phase II findings where the impact of spiritually-inspired leaders on others is discussed in-depth.

Although the spiritual dimension was fairly neglected till recent times, evidences abound on the parallels between spiritual values and effective leadership. For example it is hard to ignore the research review by Reave (2005) of over 150 studies which shows a clear consistency between spiritual values and practices of effective leadership. As this dimension begins to gain interest and momentum among pioneering forward-thinkers in the business and academic arena, opportunities to hone one's spiritual awareness is appearing in some mainstream leadership training and development programs and also among progressive business management schools around the world. (Kernochan, McCormick & White, 2007; Epstein, 2002; Delbecq, 2000).

Section 5.3 and 5.4 in Chapter 5 provides an in-depth discussion on the personal and work-values of participants showing their link to spiritual values. This link appeared more pronounced in the Eastern sample. Personal values held by the twelve business leaders studied in Phase I consistently parallel to the organisational values they espoused as important to their respective

businesses. It showed that values held strongly within the interior domains of these individuals were the same values that were perceived to be important to these leaders not only in their expectations of themselves but also of the others in the exterior work domains (See Table 5.1 in Chapter 5 for a comprehensive list of values compiled from the study).

The results also indicate a clear difference between the Western and Eastern cohort in the way they frame their views around the tacit values of spirituality (See discussion in Chapter 4: Section 4.6). The Western participants seem to use secular rather than spiritual terminology when questioned on workplace values, preferring for example to use secular words such as trust, integrity, truth, honesty, responsibility, passion, commitment, team-spirit and other moral or ethical human values clearly disassociating them with any form of transcendental concepts. In stark contrast, although the Eastern sample also used similar words, the majority of them linked these values back to a spiritual source, either citing their scriptural text, their spiritual teachers or masters, God, The Lord etc.

However, most participants from both the Eastern and Western sample agreed that their personal values were derived through a combination of life experiences such as societal, cultural, educational, religious and family influences preferring to cite all of these sources as a whole rather than pinpointing any single one as most relevant to their value formations. In a few Eastern cases, spiritual values held by these participants were translated into explicit workplace policy (see Chapter 5: Section 5.4.2), for example the policy of only reimbursing staff for vegetarian meals during work-related meetings; adhering to “halal” principles to respect Muslim relations at the work-place; providing allowances for prayer-time; celebrating religious occasions in the office premises and providing paid leave to mark religious occasions. However, despite being senior leaders in their respective organisations, not all participants in this research were functioning at the policy-makers level in their respective firms. Thus influencing workplace

policy with spiritual values was only evident among a small number of participants who as leaders also owned their business firms.

But it needs to be said that even among participants who were beyond the level of policy-making authority, there was evidence of various attempts to introduce spiritual values or practice in the workplace through lesser means, such as in the practice of religious rites or the recital of a Holy text in the office; sharing of quotes from a religious text or teachings with colleagues; or the practice of a few minutes of silence before commencing official meetings; incorporating information from new-age spiritual material within training and development modules; using spiritual inspiration in the delivery of consulting packages and so forth (see Section 5.5 in Chapter 5). These actions evidently suggest that spiritually-inspired leaders are more than likely to be influenced by their tacit spiritual dimensions in their extrinsic actions and interactions in the work-place.

The influence of spiritual values was also evident among the Business Management Consultant (see Chapter 5) cohorts who were included in the study for their independent viewpoints. Each of the four Consultants interviewed from both East and West admitted to infusing their business consulting packages to clients with spiritual values. Some of them admit that they discuss spiritual values overtly with well-established clients and in other cases, cloaking spiritual jargon in more palatable secular terminology to avoid upsetting sensitive clientele (see Chapter 5: Section 5.5.2.2).

In recent times the causative relationship between stress and leadership is becoming notoriously familiar (Smith and Cooper, 1994)..It is acknowledged that leaders of today appear susceptible to a multitude of work-related stress that can result in physical and emotional stress and strain. Without an inner balance, many top executives find themselves in difficult or demanding situations that pull them into dissonance or disengagement. To remain effective in a

business environment characterised by constant change, chaos and unpredictability, leaders need to have a reliable and constant method for self-renewal and effective coping strategies to sustain inner/outer balance as depicted in Figure 7.5 showing the central role of an inner spiritual anchor in balancing the other human dimensions.

Ashforth & Pratt (2003) clarify that essentially spirituality can be conceptualised both as a noun and a verb. In other words spirituality as a noun, is a state of being, “implied by terms like connection, holism and self-actualisation”, and as a verb spirituality is “an on-going open-ended process, a personal journey of exploration and discovery” (p.94), and therefore they rationalise that spirituality both as a state and process, is necessarily about individuals. Figure 7.5 depicts the spiritual core, the deep inner dimension that represents a person’s spirituality as either a noun or verb or both. In other words the spiritual centre can be seen as a state of being (noun), or as an active state of spiritual practice and action (verb).

The diagram depicts the general awareness of individuals which typically is both outwards (external) directed towards the world and inwards (internal) directed towards the tacit dimensions of mind, intellect, feelings etc. Of the two, the awareness of the external factors is more constant through the five faculties of sensory perceptions. However, this is not the case when it comes to the awareness of their inner worlds.

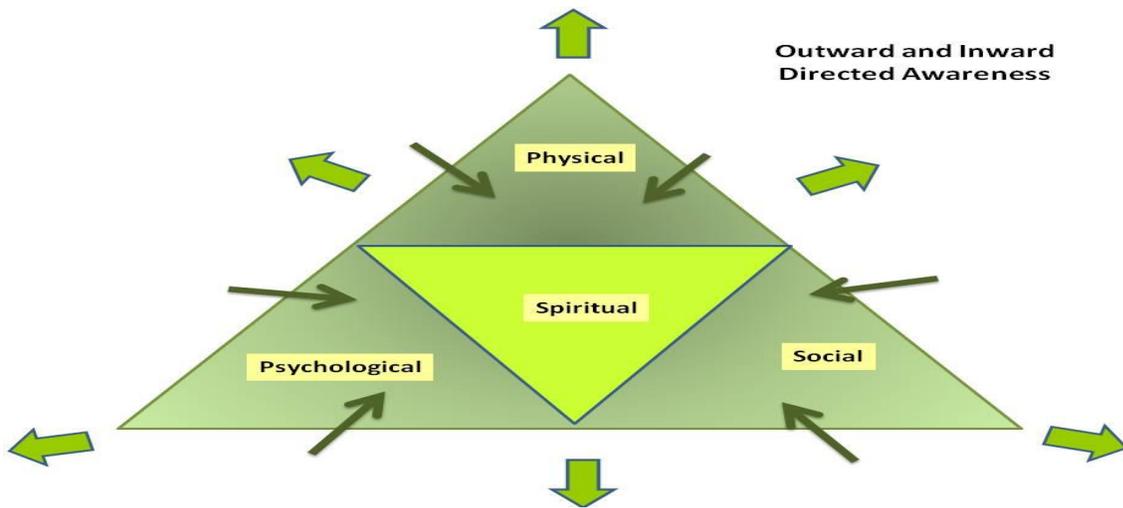


Figure 7.5: Balancing Human Dimensions With An Active Spiritual Core

Most individuals do not have constant awareness of their tacit dimensions, nor is it easy to become aware of it, as the human senses are generally outward-bound. Yet, it must be noted that the inward-outward causal links are two-way. That is, one may hypothesise that just as the inner spiritual tacit state of the individual influences and impacts the extrinsic physical, psychological and social domains, the reverse is also true. In other words, it is not at all unreasonable to assume that the tacit spiritual values of individuals which affect their extrinsic activities, can itself be subject to further refinement or adaptation based on external extrinsic experiences. This indicates that spiritual values are also evolving, being influenced by the experiences in the extrinsic world. Spiritual teachings of many traditions often caution against the fleeting nature of the extrinsic world and encourage spiritual aspirants to be anchored on their own permanent and reliable tacit reality within, through a dedicated process of conscious spiritual practice. Therefore, becoming spiritual requires the same level of dedication and intensity that is not unlike the learning of any new knowledge or skill. Just as the potential capacity to become a doctor is inherent within one's nature, yet unless the individual spends years learning and acquiring medical knowledge and skills, it is unlikely for one to become an effective or skilled doctor. Becoming spiritual is no different to becoming a doctor, in that sense. Although the capacity to become spiritual is

inherent in our human nature, it does however require dedicated conscious practice and persistence, to unleash its creative power within. Thus, spiritually-inspired leaders often have their own personal spiritual processes which they practice regularly or consistently. In the following section (Section 7.2.1) this finding is further explained through Figures 7.6 and 7.7 which further illustrate that the participants in this research, all displayed a high degree of spiritual awareness by being mindful and conscious of the fact that their inner tacit state can potentially and positively influence their external existence and vice versa. Therefore among them, there was a deliberate and conscious effort to be aware of their internal workings and managing their external engagements in a conscious way, with a heightened awareness, cognizant of acting and behaving with least harm to self and others as well as being alert to performing for the highest good for all concerned. It was a balancing act between their inner and outer states. The better their balance, the more effective and successful they became.

Figure 7.5 attempts to depict the state of being of the key participants in this research as individuals who actively seek to balance their inner-outer awareness with a spiritual practice or focus that deliberately and regularly turns their awareness inwards, being conscious of their thoughts and emotions and overall state of mind. These individuals appear to have an understanding that their experience of the world is highly dependent upon the state of their inner dimensions and their actions in the external world are therefore a result of the state of their reflected inner experiences. Anchoring themselves more and more within their own inner truths and beliefs, these individuals act in their roles in the external engagements, more on more based on their own inner viewpoints.

The first RQ ensured that participants, particularly those who proceeded to Phase II of this research, displayed a high degree of spiritual awareness and actively sought to integrate their spiritual values with all aspects of their lives, including that of their work-life. In answering the

first research question, the study led to further probe if spiritually aware or conscious leaders made for better business leaders?

Apart from the extensive literature on general implications of spirituality in the workplace presented in Chapter 2, many writers specifically draw attention to the merit of linking spiritual values to leadership, for example Fairholm (1998), Vaill (2000), Delbecq (2000), Ashar & Lane-Mayer (2004), Fry (2003, 2005), Duchon and Plowman (2005), Pruzan, Mikkelsen, Miller & Miller (2007), Pruzan & Mikkelsen (2007), Fry and Slocum (2008), and many more in the associated fields of value-based management (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004; Chakraborty & Chakraborty, 2004) and ethics in leadership (Chakraborty, 1995; Sheep, 2006). Therefore, the findings from this research further lends support to existing literature that promote the idea that spiritually-inspired leaders make better leaders as they are guided by a deeply held value system and seek congruence and alignment with between their inner and outer belief systems.

7.2.1 Acknowledgement of the tacit spiritual dimension at work

There has been much debate about the meaning and purpose of work as it relates to transformations occurring in the 21st century (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002) and many writers have argued to consider spirituality as a relevant dimension of business management leadership (Fry, 2003, Karakas 2010a; Howard, 2002) despite the fact that for the most part, it was ignored and typically not discussed in the workplace. Despite criticism of capitalism as de-humanising to the point of relegating and side-lining important cultural, religious traditions and values that give meaning and purpose in people's lives, Renesch (2008) argues that there is no other economic system that can deliver the efficiencies and effectiveness of the capitalist markets. Thus, the thrust of capitalism as the key driver for growth and prosperity right around the world gains momentum. Whilst capitalism picks up speed within the rapid pace of globalisation that shape the corporate realities of today, corporate scams and scandals of the

twentieth and twenty-first centuries fuel an interest to re-ignite questions of human wellbeing and the threat of global socio-ecological imbalances. This reality calls for a new leadership model capable of balancing prosperity measures on sustainable and humane terms. As companies adopt corporate social responsibility policies more readily, the last resistance to discussing matters of heart and soul for human well-being is also gaining momentum against the backdrop of colliding cultures, values and ethics at the workplace. It has even brought the discussion of spirituality to economic and business forums where they had been previously disregarded.

The findings in this research suggest that spirituality as a taboo-subject is no longer true although at the initial stage of this research, a level of discomfort to overtly discuss spirituality was apparent within the Western rather than the Eastern context. But as the research progressed into Phase II and having established a strong rapport with participants by that stage, the researcher discovered that with all participants in this research (including the Westerners) there was a definite enthusiasm to discuss this taboo subject. Some participants blew out interview times beyond expectation as they expressed a keen enthusiasm to share and talk on the subject of spirituality. Particularly with the key participants, the research progressed in both formal and informal dialog over a period of lengthy and deepening research relationships.

Many participants expressed their gratitude, thanking the researcher for this opportunity to share on this subject in an objective and non-threatening way. For many of them, it was the first time they had engaged in such open depth discussion on this elusive subject. For many participants it was a refreshing change to be able to express on a deeply personal subject without concern for political correctness. The opportunity to speak about spirituality in depth, and at the same time self-reflect on the subject, was deeply appreciated. It led some participants to feel as if they were engaged in an on-the-spot opportunity to engage in therapeutic exploration of their own tacit views, beliefs, values and experiences. Some participants acknowledged that this

process helped deepen their own awareness of their inner tacit worlds. It also provided the participants to explore questions they had not paid conscious attention to, although the issues discussed had been present in the unconscious recesses of their minds. Thus it was almost a process of peeling psychological layers to explore their own state of mind which many participants in the research found an engaging and worth-while process, going beyond the purpose of the research to fulfil their own personal satisfaction and self-discovery.

In all participants of this research, there was an acknowledgement of a tacit dimension of life. Whether that tacit dimension was perceived in religious or spiritual light differed between them. A clear distinction was that for the Eastern participants relating to this tacit dimension as God or something religious was quite natural, while on the other hand, overwhelmingly among the Western participants, ascribing a religious or Godly connotation to this tacit dimension was tapered down even for those who openly admitted to being Christian or being an active Church member, much preferring instead to use the word spiritual rather than religious to describe themselves. In answering the first question on the interview schedule, “Have you ever asked yourself this question: Who am I?”, the findings show that all participants (as detailed in Chapter 4).had engaged in some activity of inner reflection and self-searching or deep questioning either as a disciplined practice or as a casual undertaking for self-improvement.

On that basis, the researcher was dealing with subjects who not only were enthusiastic to participate in this research, but who were articulate on the subject matter, simply because it was an important essence of their core being and almost all the research participants had some interesting inner exploration that they wished to share in an atmosphere and relationship based on mutual trust and respect between the researcher and participants. They mostly valued the opportunity to share about a significant aspect of their lives which was often not verbally expressed or openly discussed and explored at such rational depth.

This section is concluded, providing the reader with a composite idea on what it means to be spiritually inspired. In answering RQ1, the discussions above presents an understanding of a spiritually inspired leader's inner state of mind. Also discussed were conscious processes they employed to remain aware and conscious of their deeper meaning in life.

Summarising the data from Phase I, Figure 7.6 depicts the cross-section of attributes present in an individual's spiritual dimension. It indicates that this dimension is comprised of both their inner spiritual core state and their efforts they make to sustain a regular spiritual practice or process either through meditation, prayer, scriptural study, spiritual pilgrimage, and a variety of devotional or religious practices, including charitable or altruistic actions and the practice of silence and communing with nature.



Figure 7.6 Spiritual Dimensions of Spiritually-Inspired Leaders

As pointed out by Ashforth and Pratt (2003), spirituality is both a process and an end in itself. These inner spiritual dimensions potentially provide balance to their external world of action and relations. It is the source from which they respond to external events and relations. In return, through those external experiences and engagement, they continue to feed and grow their inner spiritual strivings in a causative relationship, constantly reconciling with their pre-existing values to learn new lessons, conscious and aware that each interaction is an opportunity to expand or intensify their own inner journeys.

7.2.2 Demarcating between spirituality and religiosity

A thorough discussion on the difference between spirituality and religiosity is presented in the literature review in Chapter 2. In the findings of this research it was interesting to note that even among those participants who maintained a dutiful participation in their religious obligations, there was clear understanding of what constitutes religion versus spirituality. Their discernment on the difference between the two concepts was astute. For example, the two key Eastern participants in Phase II were tenaciously religious in their appearance and perspectives, but despite that, maintained a sophistication in elucidating the difference between religion and spirituality. This was a fortunate outcome for the researcher who did not encounter any excessive religious sensitivity during field work. The elegance of their intellectual erudition on the subject of spirituality meant that this research was conducted and completed in the most professional manner without any untoward incident despite its relatively delicate nature in exploring a sensitive subject. Also, knowing that the researcher herself had a respectful appreciation of religious practice, having herself come from a multi-cultural country where religious events were part and parcel of life, helped to put all participants at ease right from the preliminary exchanges.

The spiritual and religious diversity of participants in this research highlights the fact that to explore this subject fluidly with no restrictions, there was a need to establish an all-inclusive

approach where all kinds of religious and spiritual diversity were considered valid and had to be acknowledged as having their legitimate place within their respective context. This respectful and accepting approach provided a free-flowing framework to explore the concept of spirituality without a need for unnecessary rational fragmentation or categorisation which immensely aided the research journey. Hicks (2002) argued that many approaches to spirituality and religion in leadership studies are flawed because they fail to acknowledge religious diversity by adopting a simplistic opposing dichotomy between spirituality and religion. In this respect the approach undertaken here allows a more balanced and rigorous analysis of the role of both these concepts in organisational leadership.

Many authors from the West (Mitroff & Denton, 1999a; Cash & Gray, 2000; Heelas, 2002; Mitroff, 2003) have often presented the idea of spiritual expression to be either superior or more appropriate as opposed to the idea of religious expression in the workplace, perhaps to maintain or promote the idea of a secularist workplace ideology. This research however revealed that despite the outward appearance of secularism at work, particularly in the Western setting, many participants held a personal sacred spiritual or religious belief and felt an unspoken need to either suppress or compartmentalise those aspects of their lives at the workplace, except perhaps among very rare and trusted circles. One participant from the Australian case-study offers a reasonable explanation for this phenomenon as follows:

“The organisation is located in a secular world. Which means we can only extend our conversations and the way we connect with one another on a secular level, unless if it is invited, openly invited... Christmas and Easter in Melbourne for example has been subjected to a level of political correctness in our society to not even spell the word, by turning it into something like “Seasons Greetings...”

(AICW2, see Appendix 7.22 for full excerpt)

The above explanation was substantiated by a few other Western participants who felt that spiritual or religious expression can be offensive in an environment of cultural diversity and so

the unspoken or unwritten code of conduct to keep these matters at bay is a practical solution to avoid spiritual or religious sensitivities, which might create unnecessary tensions at work.

The question however remains if this implicit expectation forces individuals to fragmentise their personality to fit into expected social norms that are not highly tolerant of spiritual or religious expression. The key participant in the Western case-study, for example, was confirmed by all his interviewed colleagues, as a person who does not overtly speak about his spiritual value. Yet, practically all of them concurred, in their assessment of A1KP that he was spiritual despite his lack of overt display of any spiritual nor religious belief or value. A1KP himself had admitted, that at work he was open to discuss his values but not necessarily using the language of spirituality, again indicating that in the Western work environment, overt display of spiritual values is uncommon.

This political correctness was less evident in the Malaysian context where, religious traditions in the form of practice, symbols, language, rites and rituals were all commonplace and were generally freely expressed at work. The only caveat added to this by one participant was the worry that there might occasionally be the rare incident of an over-enthusiastic religious fanatic who proselytizes for a particular religion causing discomfort to others, but he added that such incidents are very rare in a climate of cultural tolerance and religious sensibility.

This finding seems to suggest that the tensions surrounding the opposing spiritual-religious dichotomy hotly debated in mainstream Western management literature appears to be extraneous in the Eastern context. The reason for this could very well be attributed to the differing and unique cultural evolution and heritage of both the Eastern and Western worlds. One business management consultant who participated in this study offered his insights. He explains;

“We in the East are overly influenced by the secular West, but historically, in the 18th century, the separation of the Church and the State didn’t happen in Asia. For most

people in these parts of the world, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism is a way of life. It cannot be separated from anything in life. It is illogical to separate. For example, for Muslims, Science and Religion are one.”

(See Chapter 5, Section 5.5.2.1: Narrative by Business Consultant AZ)

This explanation could be one of many factors to appreciate why the religious structures of the East remains a strong influence over the ages. The following section explores this phenomenon further to understand what brings these participants to engage in an inner awareness of self. Specifically what triggered the unique spiritual journey and inquiry of individuals from both the Eastern and Western cohorts? In other words what drives individuals towards a spiritual awakening or a religious engagement in the first instance and are these drivers culturally embedded?

7.2.3 Significant triggers leading to spiritual inquiry

In Phase I of this research, evidence emerged to substantiate that there are different reasons as to why individuals develop a spiritual or religious intent. It was found that different participants had different triggers in their lives that led to a deeper inner inquiry. In some cases, these triggers tend to be traumatic or difficult circumstances that chip away at their sense of self, forcing them to perceive things differently.

Difficult external situations ultimately lead to profound inner shifts leading to a breaking free or changing of existing mental models within the individuals concerned. As a result, the participants begin to engage and do things differently in the external world. This process can involve periods of uncertainty, extreme upheaval, or even depression for some. Indeed, for a few participants the triggers were extreme such as near-death experiences. It suggest that the spiritual motivation or pursuit is a primal tendency which humans reach for or return to, especially when they are confronted with some threat to their lives, whether the threat was real or perceived.

The participants in this research who experienced any such threat early or even later in life seem to have held a spiritual or religious belief more consistently for much longer. Others seem to have arrived at a spiritual inquiry through a gradual progression through life, searching for a sense of contentment and peace, without major threats or upheavals in life. The experiences of these participants seem to indicate that a spiritual search begins for individuals in one of three ways:

1. Through trauma, (physical or emotional pain or suffering)
2. Influence of significant others
3. Natural progression of search for deeper meaning or contentment in life.

In Table 7.1, in the following page, the first row in both the Eastern and Western columns suggest that when individuals are faced with extremely threatening or traumatic life circumstances (such as accidents, illness, death or loss of a loved one, loss of a job or failure of some kind), there is a tendency to recede into an internal space of deep questioning and re-evaluation. Difficult circumstances or events compel one to reassess, evaluate and see beyond the failed structures of dependency in one's life to seek a source "more dependable", leading to a search for a higher or more powerful source, to deal with life issues, as such triggering a spiritual seeking.

Just as human development is a function of both nature and nurture, the progressive or evolutionary journey towards spiritual development can be a combination of personality types or attributes (nature) and the environment (nurture) in which their spiritual curiosity was incubated. Indeed the research depicted different personalities in the research participants from Phase I ranging from introverted to extroverted types. Some participants were naturally introspective or contemplative and preferring solitude such as AB, JEF, JEM, DMH, JTP and ZMS while others such as IK, DVE, KM, DTHTMI and NF were highly participative in social circles and basked in

community engagement. For example, JEM from the introverted group would go on long hikes into the wilderness by himself, to connect with nature to rejuvenate, contemplate and think. Table 7.1 presents the findings on various triggers leading to spiritual inquiry from this research.

	Eastern	Western
Trauma or significant event	DTHTMI: Personal and Family Crisis led DHTMI in his teens found himself destitute when his father’s business when bankrupt. He questioned his religious belief when his own relatives failed to care for him, but was provided shelter and adopted by a kind Samaritan of a different religion and creed.	AB: Personal crisis leading to depression and disengagement at work. <i>“Since that incident I meditated every day for 2 years and had certain profound experiences”</i> IK: Health crisis that led to a re-awakening to <i>“my early connections with the divine”</i> JEF: Family crisis - <i>“When my daughters were born with disabilities and when my parents died”</i> DMH: Family death - <i>“When my grandmother died. It made me confront who I am within”</i> JEM: Had a revelation in a very religious place. <i>“I got a vivid feeling. I felt blessed”</i>
Influence of Significant Others	DVE: My Father. <i>“He used to sing devotional songs at home. I grew up with it... now I get re-awakened to spirituality all around me, it’s a way of life for me”</i> KM: My parents. <i>“ I still practice the religious traditions I witnessed as a child in my home to pass it on to my children and the next generation”</i>	NF: <i>“I am inspired by Jesus as a Man not a God...also the story of Mandela and Gandhi”</i> IK: My Spiritual Master <i>“I was most significantly inspired by Andrew Cohen”</i>
Natural Progression	JTP: Influenced by my family worship, my sisters were a strong influence, later my circle of friends. <i>“ It was a slow evolutionary process”</i> ZMS: Religious education from age five onwards. DTHTMI: Religious education. <i>“The Quran classes I attended is the foundation of my belief”</i> JTP: My Church <i>“As a Christian we were taught the importance of our religious duties”</i>	JEM: Parents were fairly religious, so used to attend Anglican Church for Sunday service but progressively stopped attending mass when young daughters became resistant to attending church. DMH: Continues to attend church to maintain Christian values for her children

Table 7.1 Triggers Leading to Spiritual Inquiry

On the other hand, an extroverted personality such as DTHTMI, keeps a punishing social schedule in the company of others, doing community work, beyond running his business. He insists the goodwill and prayers he receives from people he helps in the community keeps him hearty and healthy. Thus, the second way in which individuals turn to a spiritual inquiry is when there is no significant triggering event, when everything seems fine on the surface, without any real issues or problems and yet there is a curiosity or a nagging internal discontent that seeks a higher truth or existence

Some individuals such as AB in this research, report that this inner discontent regressed them into a state of depression which resulted in greater intensity in self-examination, while others such as JEF were moved by an inner drive to analyse their lives for self-improvement leading to a spiritual inquiry. In this research both categories were represented in the findings. Some participants who did not experience any major event or upheaval in their lives pointed to significant others who were role models whom influenced them to turn to philosophical questioning of life. For example, DVE and KM reported that a respected parent whom they looked up to and whose values they had admired growing up continue to influence strongly in their adult lives. NF found inspiration in Jesus and famous freedom leaders such as Mandela and Gandhi while IK was significantly inspired by his Spiritual Master, a new age Western teacher trained in the traditions of Eastern philosophy.

Between the Eastern and Western cohort it is clear that the path to spiritual development is as varied and endless as the number of individuals in question. However, in categorising the triggers to their spiritual inquiry or development, it appears that the natural progression from religious ideologies to spiritual development was more prominent in the Eastern sample, where religious structures provided the early foundations for a persons' inquisitiveness about mystical

or divine subjects whether this happened in formal religious classes, place of worship or religious rites and rituals performed at home. The Eastern participants displayed great pride and loyalty to their cultural religious heritage.

Also, none of the Eastern participants had switched to a different religion or entirely dropped their religious heritage, despite progressing to a spiritual life. Indeed, as they matured through stages and experiences of their own personal lives, particularly in the case of individuals with robust intellects such as most participants in this research who were highly educated, it appeared to be a natural phenomenon to move from supernatural religious beliefs to logical existential questions. Thus, the distinction from religious to spiritual was opaque. In fact most of the Eastern participants could not discuss the religious and spiritual context with clear distinction due to an emotional attachment to their religious ideals or teachings, which they insist informs their spiritual endeavours (see Chapter 4, Eastern participant profiles). Religious overtones overflowed or overlapped spiritual practice fluidly, making it difficult to distinguish between the two concepts. In other words, the process of transitioning from religious to spiritual appeared more emotional and instinctive for the Easterners, one that was not made out of rational discriminating conscious choice.

On the contrary, in the Western cohort, there appeared to be a suppressed resistance to religious structures and thus even for those participants who had a religious background or inspiration, that influence was often stunted at some point leading to either extreme rejection of religious authorities and structures or a cautioned approach to any form of religious engagement, preferring to associate as being spiritual rather than religious and making a clear distinction between the two concepts.

For example, A1KP who admittedly was fond of the Minister at his Anglican Church, and who used to attend Church regularly at one time has fallen right off from attending Church

altogether, saying he no longer feels connected to the Church after attaining greater spiritual awareness and also after his teenage daughters lost interest to attend Church (see Self-disclosure by A1KP in Section, 6.4.1.2, Chapter 6). AB for example has moved away from his own religious heritage and has adopted a Buddhist practice instead. This was true for most of the other Western participants such as JE(M), JE(F), IK and NF except for one. DME was the only Western participant who remains in her religious heritage since birth, rationalising that she continues to attend Church services to maintain Christian values for her children. Thus it is apparent that for the majority in the Western cohort, any religio-spiritual practice or transitions was often a conscious choice using a very cognitive-rational intellectual decision-making approach to switch to a spiritual path of individual preference.

7.2.4 Habits and practice of spiritual awareness

From the depictions of various narratives gathered in this research, it appears that different individuals make various efforts to connect or communicate to a higher or supreme power through a variety of spiritual or religious practice. In categorising the various spiritual paths, Barnett, Krell & Sendry (2000) provide a scale on which to categorise the variety of pathways through which an individual may choose to experience their spirituality. The following Figure 7.7 is adapted to provide a useful categorisation to describe the spiritual practices or habits of the participants in this research.

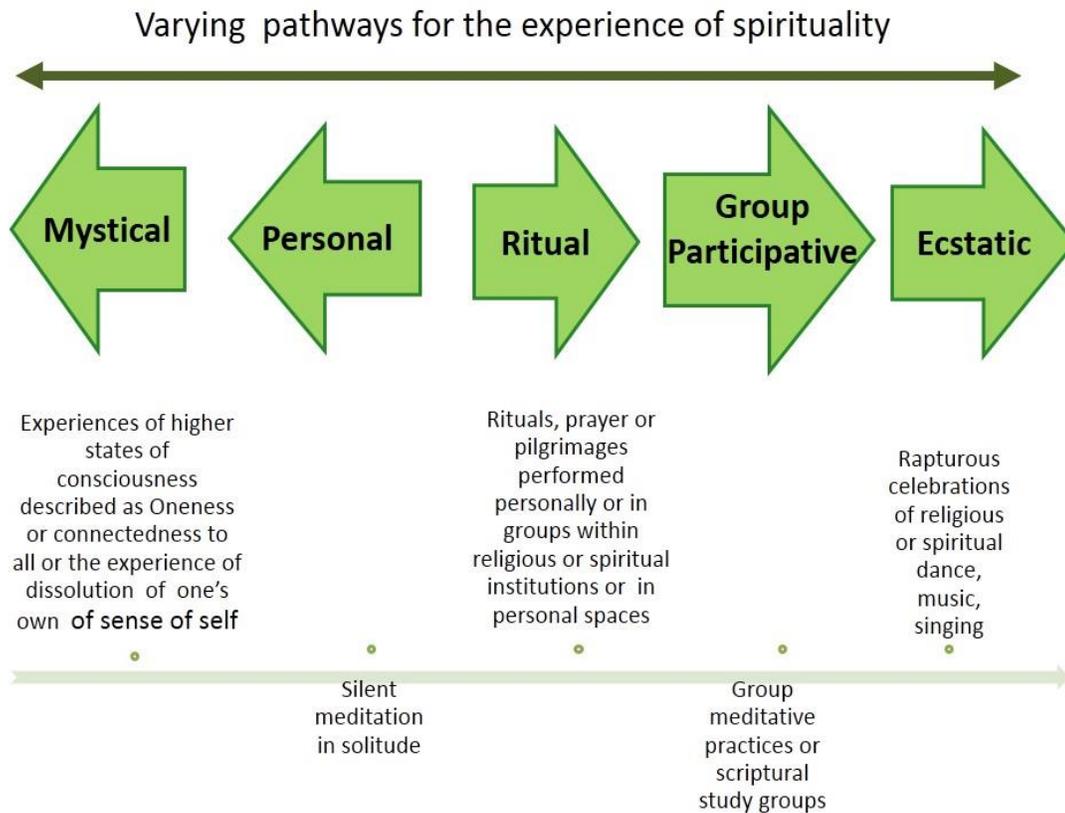


Figure 7.7 Categorisation of Spiritual Paths

(Adapted from Barnett, Krell & Sendry (2000))

These authors explain that an individual seeking to experience their own spirituality may choose any one or more of the pathways described on this scale adding that “sometimes individuals choose or even create the path taken. Sometimes they are directed, perhaps by family or culture, onto a path that they follow for a lifetime. Often, however, they accidentally stumble or experiment their way onto a particular type of path. (p.566)” Using this ordinal scale in Figure 7.7 as a guide, the religious spiritual practice of the Eastern and Western participants in this research are mapped (see Table 7.2).

Spiritual Path	Eastern	Western
Mystical (privately driven transcendent states of being that involve experience that lies beyond the ordinary range of human perception)	DTHTMI : insist his good health and high energy and motivation is due to the mutual love and prayers he shares and receives from the people he serves through his tireless community work.	IK : <i>"I am consciousness itself...through Andrew Cohen's meditations, I have this awareness"</i> RH believes he has a guardian angel that "talks" to him and guides him through life.
Personal (e.g. Meditating in solitude, Self-study and reflective experience, logical understanding of scripture)	None mapped from Eastern cohort.	IK is a regular meditator. AB : <i>"I'm inclined to Buddhist teachings and I meditated daily for two years...now more sporadically"</i> JE(F) has become interested in other religions and believes in personal choice when choosing one's faith
Ritual (e.g. participation or observation or religious rites, rituals, worship etc.)	KM : <i>"I regularly go to religious pilgrimages to India at least two to three times a year...I also practice religious celebrations in my home to impart our religious values to our children, the next generation."</i> DTHTM : <i>"I pray 5 times a day and fulfil my religious obligations"</i> ZMS : <i>"I observe my religious duties"</i> DVE : <i>"We have a 'Pooja'.Room at home where I pray and conduct rituals daily"</i>	DMH attends church services regularly mainly to impart values to her children JE(M) and JE(F) , used to be regular church goers, but JEF has become interested in other religions. JEM now only attends Christmas mass. NF a former Anglican priest has renounced Church altogether.
Group Participative (e.g. emotion generated through group experience, such as group singing hymns, chanting, pilgrimages etc)	DTHTMI : Observes the call for prayer 5 times a day with Muslim brothers and sisters, even in the office where there is dedicated prayer space. JTF attends mass service at Church regularly. KM participates in celebratory religious rituals that involve singing religious hymns.	NF : <i>"It's all about love. I try to be loving in all my personal and professional relationships"</i>
Ecstatic (publicly driven outward-directed feelings or emotions that are increasingly ecstatically transformational)	JFF participates in group meditation that takes him to ecstatic rapturous states which sometimes means his tears of joy flow freely. He entered into that ecstatic space once during the interview, when he was visibly moved talking about spiritual beliefs and his tears flowed.	None mapped from Western cohort

Table 7.2 Religious-Spiritual Practice between Eastern and Western Participants

The table shows that religious practice such as regular prayer or attendance at a place of worship was mainly culturally ingrained. For some of the participants, particularly those from the

Eastern sample, various occasions mark their religious practice through a variety of religious rites, ceremonies and celebrations which are often practiced communally and even shared/enjoyed by other communities. This is further reinforced by the national culture in which religious days of the multi-cultural communities are observed and even appropriated with state or federal holidays. Malaysians celebrate their religious diversity with public holidays marking all religious occasions of the major religious denominations in the country. Although considered an Islamic state, the average Malaysian is exposed to religious diversity through religious freedom sanctioned by the Federal Constitution (Bouma, Ling and Pratt, 2010). KM, from the Eastern sample, explained that it was a way to educate the younger generation of their religious and cultural heritage so that the tradition continues from one generation to the next.

In the Western sample, apart from Christmas and Easter celebrations, other forms of celebratory religious practices were not widely evident. Except for one participant (DMH), most of the Western participants saw these religious occasions more as a holiday time to get-together for food and drinks with family and friends rather than to mark a religious tradition.

On the other hand when it came to personal practice, most participants from both Eastern and Western cohorts engage at more regular intervals in prayer or meditation done solitarily in the private confines of a religious space or anywhere they found privacy whether at the office or at home. DTHTMI has a prayer room for staff in the office where communal prayers occur during the Muslim prayer times. KM has a religious altar in her office where she “connects to her God”. JE(M) finds space in nature to observe silence and solitude to engage within his deeper self.

These various acts of spiritual practice is a deliberate attempt to withdraw from external engagement and focus within, delving into their own inner worlds to find meaning and strength and sometimes inner guidance through communion with a higher or spiritual source. This is done at regular intervals such as daily or weekly practice for most of the participants while others such

as DMH and JE(F) returned to some form of spiritual or religious practice, particularly when confronted with difficult moments in their life experience. Participants report that this inward shift when intensely pursued brings a sense of peace, calm and deep meaning to themselves. Their spiritual value is a deep anchor on which these individuals steadily moor to deal and manage life on the surface. Such deep sense of faith in an inner self appear to develop over time and these individuals have an ability to inspire themselves and others, regardless of how difficult external situations can get.

During the conduct of the second case study in Malaysia, the researcher witnessed first-hand the role of spiritual conviction, when a thug appeared at the office building of one of the key participant, hurling abuses and acting threateningly. The researcher witnessed the participant calmly secure the office premise, ordering a lock-down. She then proceeded into her office where she prayed at the altar after which, with calm and composure rang the police and also her husband who was a lawyer, to relate the incident. After the arrival of the police and the thug was in custody, she was later able to refer to the incident and informed the researcher, how in her few moments of prayer she received clarity and courage to do what was necessary when dealing with difficult circumstances in the office, as the extreme event witnessed on that day.

In circumstances where business environments are corrupt and as this case illustrates, sometimes even unsafe, a leader has to rely on clarity of thought and action to make quick and sometimes spontaneous decisions to manage often tricky, unethical and even dangerous circumstances. As exemplified by this key participant (M2KP) in the Malaysian case-study, faith in her Lord provided her a sense of calmness and peace from which she drew strength, resolve and character to handle a dramatically difficult moment at work. With this tacit, unseen connection to a deep divine held within, this participant appeared quite unfazed and capable of managing and handling testing moments without becoming overwhelmed or unduly stressed. In

the process, she resolved the matter professionally, and was admirably watched by her co-workers whose respect of her must have increased a notch that day (the narrative recorded from her office manager, M2CW1, testifies this point in a later interview - see Section 6.3.3.4a, Chapter 6). It is a case in point to highlight how some business leaders function effectively in the world juggling their responsibilities with confidence and clarity through a constant connection to an internal spiritual reference point. These leaders seem to draw strength and wisdom from an inner spiritual source within themselves, and they ultimately rely on their own intuitive creative capacity when dealing in the external world of work in the present era commonly characterised by chaos and uncertainty.

As seen from the narratives presented from employees and other stakeholders as highlighted in Chapters 6, Sections (6.3.1.4, 6.3.2.3, 6.3.3.4, 6.3.4.3, 6.4.1.4, and 6.4.2), conscious leaders are powerful in inspiring and influencing a vast majority of others they come into contact with. Through effective and conscientious and sustainable decision-making, these leaders are seen to bring a positive influence on co-workers, contribute to a positive organisational climate and sometimes also positively impact the larger society through their social welfare engagements. This research describes through an assortment of direct personal narratives of key participants where they relate their own unique internal experience of what it means to be spiritually aware. The narratives obtained in the case studies presented in Chapter 6 provided various insights from multiple sources, providing a unique fishbowl view into how several such conscious leaders are impacting the world of work and beyond.

7.2.5 Source of initial support and inspiration for conscious leaders

The findings from Phase I of this research indicate that for most of the Eastern participants their family of birth had a strong influence on their spiritual or religious ideals. The findings from Phase II indicate that the two Eastern participants were strongly influenced by their childhood

experiences of being inspired by strong figures in their lives. In the case of M1KP's childhood, his father was a wealthy and a social philanthropist in their town, and he was deeply religious and a strict parent who ensured a religious Muslim education for his children, enrolling M1KP in a Muslim college through which he inherited his own deep religious values. M1KP suffered several traumatic and tragic events in his young life. When his father ran into financial hardship due to severe losses in his business and was forced to return back to his homeland in India, M1KP suffered the consequences that eventually led him to a state of homelessness, sleeping in a bus-stop and working in the local markets to support himself as a young youth, skipping school if he had to work to feed himself. It was also this traumatic event that led a transformation within himself, when a stranger woman in the village who knew his father, recognised him, kindly took him in as a member of her own family and provided shelter and education. This woman of a different faith became his surrogate mother, and his personal values were tested when his own Muslim relatives did not come to his aid when he was in dire straits.

It was a deep lesson on humanity for the Eastern participant, M1KP who is now a successful businessman and a celebrated philanthropist himself, helping the poor, the down-trodden and championing the cause for educating poor village children in Malaysia. He is renowned in his local community and known to help all, regardless of race or creed. In later years he had multiple brushes with death, which reinforced in him that the prayers and good-will of the people he helps has a divine return in protecting him from harm. Indeed, when he was taken ill on a few occasions, prayer-groups were formed by various communities to pray for his return to health. Despite his advancing age and a variety of health issues, this participant is bountiful in energy when it comes to his community work and engagement. He insists that his source of energy and constant rejuvenation is from a divine source (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1.2, Self-Disclosure by M1KP for detailed accounts of his spiritual beliefs).

For the Western participant, in the case of A1KP, his parents were deeply religious church-goers and so there was a definite exposure to religious life at a young age. However, as a mature family-man he had later distanced himself from the Church even though the pastor at the Church was a dear friend to him. This was mainly because his two teenage daughters developed an aversion to attend service at Church and family day events organised by the Church. His attendance began to gradually decline to attend church only once a year for Christmas as a tradition more than out of any real commitment to Church events.

It is evident from both the Eastern and Western examples that an individual's family heritage did strongly influence their spiritual evolution. The discussion in this section shows that with life experiences, the research subjects do question their inherited beliefs sometimes adapting or adjusting their value systems or spiritual practice according to changing needs in their personal lives. Thus the spiritual journey as well as their spiritual values and beliefs in these examples can be seen to be dynamic rather than dogmatic for these subjects.

7.2.6 Profile of a spiritually inspired leader

Having analysed the many factors that explain and describe both the tacit and explicit dimensions of spirituality and its inter-connections to physiological, psychological and social circumstances, a composite picture is drawn to profile the characteristics of a spiritually inspired leader based on the findings of this research. This is presented in Figure 7.8 which is an attempt to capture these values of a spiritually inspired leader to show how these individuals appear to balance their physical, psychological and social dimensions by remaining anchored to their own personally defined central spiritual tenet. It shows that spiritually inspired individuals tend to be physically active with high energy and vibrancy in their chosen professional or social fields. These leaders, such as the key participants analysed in the three case-studies, appear to be conscious of their body's needs for exercise and good diet and supplements. In fact, all three

interviewed confessed that they felt they were often not doing enough to maintain a healthy body due to time constraints. Some of the individuals in this research despite coping with some minor and major health issues were rarely deterred from their personal or life goals, seeming to obtain energy from engaging in their lives' passions and goals as depicted in Figure 7.8.

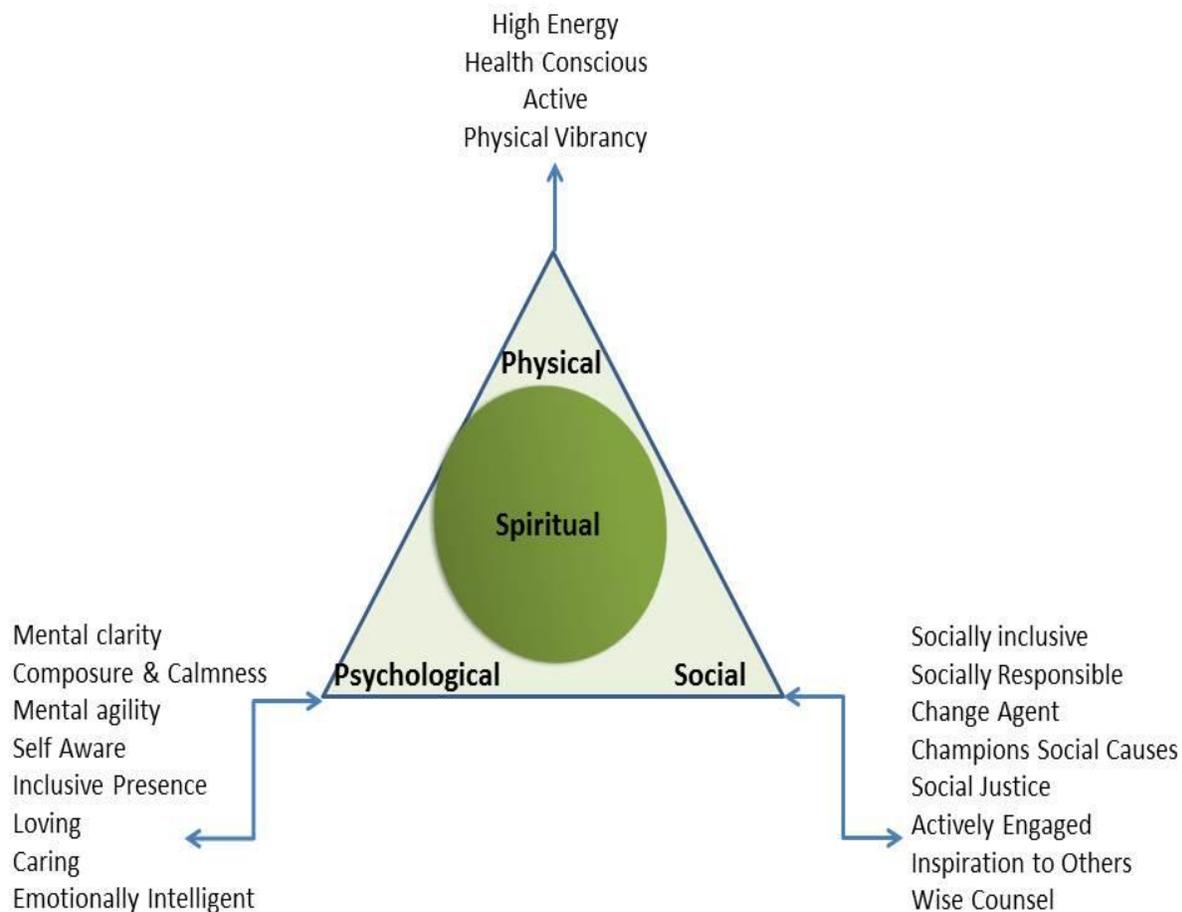


Figure 7.8 Profile of a Spiritually-Inspired Leader

For example, despite collapsing from sheer fatigue at a community event, M1KP was back at his gruelling schedule within two weeks. His community work involves frequent interstate and overseas travel and his hours at work are long. His wife, who is a doctor, is constantly by his side, monitoring his health as he is often guilty of pushing himself to the limits despite being in his

sixties. When questioned why he keeps such a punishing schedule, M1KP simply shrugs it off and says that God is with him and the love and prayers of his friends and family will keep him safe.

Psychologically they were driven by their own inner value system, that seem to render them to be high on emotional intelligence and having the will and grit to cope even with adverse external situations with great calm and composure relying on their inner spiritual reserves to provide mental clarity and agility to respond to situations effectively. Their presence in their environment is based on a loving and caring emphatic attitude towards others, making them appear to be much loved by their peers and colleagues. In their own minds, they saw themselves as important role models for others and therefore were highly conscious of their duties and responsibilities towards those they led.

For example M2KP's calm response to a potentially explosive situation at the office (see Chapter 6: Section 6.3.3.2, Self-disclosure by M2KP) demonstrated her deep composure to act with precise and focussed attention, whilst ensuring the safety and security of her staff members. It is an excellent illustration that reflects her insightful wisdom which was a fine mix of clarity of action with emphatic concern for those who were impacted by the potential danger at hand. It required quick thinking and fast action, and instead of panicking, this leader, responded to an unfolding drama in her office by re-connecting to her inner self, which she did first and foremost, finding the time in that tense moment to have a private prayer at her altar in the office, and then springing into a series of determined action to handle the problem at hand effectively.

The ability to make good decisions with emphatic concern or an inclusive awareness for all, is perceived with admiration by her staff members who witnessed the events of the day, seeing their leader in action. It further cements their love and trust towards her, as they watched how she responded by ensuring their safety was not compromised. The integrity of the leader to do the

right thing in the face of adversity is a source of great admiration and loyalty for the staff members. Drawing on their own inner sense of fairness and justice, these spiritually-inspired leaders often advocated the interest for all in their care in a spirit of social inclusiveness particularly of “underdogs” who needed to be protected in politically charged work environments. Such as when A1KP speaks up on behalf of a staff member in a pay review forum to ensure she was fairly treated even in her absence, such acts of fairness and respect for staff members is seen to represent a leader who has integrity and who can be trusted to care for their best interest, at all times. Such integrity of leaders is known and felt by members of their workplace (with news of their actions travelling through the grapevine) to earn themselves a high level of trust from their fellow-workers. This sense of trust and loyalty arising from these small but significant incidences are immense and long-lasting. Thus, with his actions, A1KP inadvertently creates an environment of deep trust amongst his colleagues who tend to view him as a “wise counsel” whom they trust would be objective and impartial in representing their interest in the power-circles of the organisation.

These spiritually-inspired leaders were also aware that their colleagues in the organisation drew inspiration from their actions and so were highly mindful of the needs of their fellow-workers, often championing positive change and courageously challenging organisational systems and processes that are politically motivated or biased towards them and their colleagues. For example, A1KP of the Australian case-study, instituted new recommendations and innovatively saw new ideas through to fruition, thus he was respected for his forward-thinking ways. M2KP for instance was open-minded, ready to give it all up for new challenges, thus there appears to be no ego attachment to her success or achievements at work, as she displays a level of adventure in challenging old boundaries and looking for new horizons in her work and social engagements. She remains optimistic and open-minded to new challenges and opportunities and

is ever-ready to impart her skills and knowledge to her staff to groom them to run the business in her absence, trusting them as well as allowing her staff room to learn and grow.

7.2.7 Summary of RQ1

In concluding the findings of RQ1, it was clearly established that each of the key participants in this research were individuals who had a high degree of spiritual awareness which allowed them to be in an inner space of wisdom from which they drew strength and courage to act in the external world. The analysis covered how these participants imbibed spiritual values and the triggers that led them to become spiritually inclined. It was found that this occurred either through the influence of their cultural heritage, through traumatic events, influence of significant others or through a natural progression towards finding a deeper meaning and contentment in life. The discussion thus far has also shown that the key participants act in their external extrinsic roles by always returning to anchor on their intrinsic values and belief systems.

These spiritually-inspired leaders also routinely or regularly engage in spiritual or religious practice to always remain connected to their own internal wisdom. Many examples have been given in this discussion to highlight how a spiritually inspired leader seems to consistently rely on their own inner insight rather than act according to the flavour of the month. The participants in this research were also highly articulate in differentiating spirituality from religiosity although the Eastern participants displayed a greater ease with religious practice whilst the Western participants had a need to be more considered in their expressions and preferred to be identified as spiritual rather than religious. The discussion has also ventured to consider if spiritually-inspired leaders made for better leaders.

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002a; 2002b) argue that a leader's emotions are contagious and must resonate energy and enthusiasm in the organisations they lead. They highlight four leadership competencies category and their value attributes for the new leaders

who they argue must seek to create resonance in their workplaces (See Table 7.3 in the following pages).

Practically all the value attributes of the leaders identified in this study can be mapped against those listed in Table 7.3. This suggests that the key participants involved in this research were highly resonant leaders capable of igniting outstanding performance in their respective organisations. Their value-set are highly compatible to the list presented by Goleman, Boyatzis and Mckee (2002a, 2002b) in the field of emotional intelligence and leadership. The key contribution made by this research is that all the leaders interviewed in this study had acknowledged to being spiritually inclined through a variety of religious and spiritual practices. Thus the question that begs to be asked is, if spiritual leaders make for high performing effective leaders for the present and future world of business which is explored in RQ4 in this study.

The results from Phase I clearly highlighted the many good attributes that a spiritually inspired leader displayed which can be summarised as a leader with a high level of capacity and integrity for high performance. Spiritually inclined leaders have a certain level of attributes which stood them in good stead to lead co-workers who appear to resonate with the ideals of these leaders, perceiving them with trust and loyalty.

Leadership Competencies Category	Competencies	Value Attributes
Self-Awareness	Emotional Self Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attuned to inner signals • Intuit the best course of action • Candid • Authentic • Open • Conviction on guiding vision
	Accurate Self-Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know their limitation & strengths • Sense of humour about themselves • Gracefulness in learning • Welcome constructive criticism • Receive feedback
	Self-Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play to their strengths • Welcome difficult assignments • Sense of presence & self-assurance • Stand out in a group
Self-Management	Self-control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control disturbing emotions • Control impulses • Stays calm & clear headed under high stress or during crisis • Unflappable in trying situations
	Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic openness to others • Display integrity • Openly admit mistakes or faults • Confront unethical behaviour of others rather than turn a blind eye.
	Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can juggle multiple demands without losing focus or energy • Comfortable with inevitable ambiguities • Flexible in adapting to new challenges • Nimble in adjusting to fluid change • Limber in their thinking of new data or realities
	Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High personal standards • Constantly seek performance improvements • Pragmatic • Set measurable but challenging goals • Calculate risk for attainable goals • Continually learn and teach
	Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of efficacy • Take control of their own destiny • Excel in initiative • Seize opportunities or create them • Cuts through red tape • Bends rules when necessary
	Optimism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See opportunity rather than threat in setbacks • See others positively, expecting best out of others • “Glass-half full” rather than “half-empty” view
Social Awareness	Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attune to a wide-range of emotional signals • Sense the felt but unspoken emotions in the individual or groups • Listens attentively • Gets along in diverse cultures
	Organisational Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politically astute • Detects social networks • Read key power relationships • Understand political forces • Understand guiding values and unspoken rules
	Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster emotional climate where they monitor

Leadership Competencies Category	Competencies	Value Attributes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> client satisfaction • Make themselves available as needed
Relationship Management	Inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create resonance that moves people • Compelling or shared mission • Embody what they ask of others • Able to articulate a shared vision • Inspires others to follow • Offer a sense of common purpose • Makes work exciting
	Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding just the right appeal from a given listener • Knowing how to build “buy-in” from key people • Achieve network of support for an initiative • Persuasive • Engaging when addressing a group
	Developing Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine interest in those they are helping • Understand the goals, strengths and weakness of others • Give timely and constructive feedback • Are natural mentors or coaches
	Change Catalyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the need for change • Challenge the status quo • Champion the new order • Advocates for change even in face of opposition • Overcome barriers to change
	Conflict Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to draw out all parties • Understand the different perspectives • Find a common ideal that everyone can endorse • Acknowledge feelings of conflicting parties • Redirect energies toward shared ideal
	Teamwork & Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate atmosphere of friendly collegiality • Models of respect, helpfulness and cooperation • Draw others into active, enthusiastic, commitment to collective effort • Build spirit and identity • Forge relationships beyond work obligations

Table 7.3 Leadership Competencies and Their Value Attributes
(Adapted from Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2003))

These assertions will be further validated in the following Section 7.3 and onwards. The rest of the discussion in this Chapter will closely analyse the findings of Phase II, looking into individual and organisational impacts of these spiritually aware business leaders. The findings reveal some inspiring and interesting realities relevant to the current workplace issues.

7.3 SPIRITUALLY-INSPIRED LEADER’S IMPACT ON OTHERS

The themes derived from Phase I interviews focussed on the primary participants and their personal as well as spiritual values. From the analysis of transcribed interviews in Phase I, a set

of similar altruistic values appeared repeatedly across many participants regardless of their cultural origin of East or West. The findings were used to draw an initial profile of a spiritually inspired leader using data sourced from the primary subjects based on their own conscious awareness of their own inner spiritual beliefs and values. Thus, in answering RQ1, the previous section clearly provides sufficient evidence to suggest that although all participants in this research were selected based on their spiritual or religious inclinations, Phase I of this research positively established that these individuals were highly aware and lived by their own inner spiritual beliefs and values even if some of them had not thought about it in as conscious a manner as this research required them to deliberately articulate. Therefore, with the initial profile of a spiritually inspired leader drawn from answering RQ1, the research sought to further ratify this profile against the findings from Phase II. In this Phase, data was collected from significant others who live and work closely with the key participants. These include accounts obtained from both their family and professional circles in the three case-studies to answer the remaining three RQs;

- RQ 2: to see what workplace value systems exist among organisational members (to see if they reflected the values of their leaders);
- RQ3: to find if there was evidence of spiritual dimensions practiced in the workplace and finally;
- RQ4: to examine if spiritual dimensions influenced and/or enhanced workplace behaviour and activity.

The aim of Phase II of the research was to establish if the presence of a spiritually inspired leader leads to the use of tacit spiritual values in managing and promoting greater meaning, purpose, and motivation or worker satisfaction at the workplace. The discussion aims to ultimately propose an effective model for transformation of work environment based on a socio-

spiritual paradigm. Inevitably, answering RQ2-RQ4 also requires the researcher to present contextual information on why it is important to consider these questions. The ultimate aim is to create a synthesis of how a spiritually inspired leader can positively impact his/her immediate social relations and environment.

7.3.1 Meaning and purpose of work: Why work?

This section aims to establish if in working for a spiritually inspired leader, employees find greater meaning, satisfaction and motivation. (Sinek, 2009) suggest that for leaders to earn the loyalty of their followers they must understand *why* it is being done and that comes through communication of the leader. It can be deduced that the question of *why* one works, or *why* one leads or employs others and *why* one is engaged in any activity at all, is a matter of deep inquiry in the new global era where culturally embedded traditional construction of meaning and purpose is incessantly challenged within the daily collision course of global exchanges. Any individual who has arrived at why has thought about the *whats* and the *hows* and realised there must be an underlying *why* to life. This *why* questioning, when pursued intensely and sincerely inevitably leads into the realm of spirituality. It is an existential question, vital to shaping an individual's chosen mode of existence and moral stance with respect to the rest of the world.

Against this backdrop, the findings of this research suggest that individuals who make the connection between their own *why*, and their leader's *why*, are those who appear most positively motivated and fulfilled with their roles at work, such as in the following:

“Staff like children learn from what you do, not what you say. I believe if I'm honest and truthful, they won't let me down.... I am certain I have achieved this level of success in my life due to my strong foundation of spiritual values which takes years, even generations to build - such a strong value system. If it's eroding in the present generation, we are to blame! The leader is important. No two ways about it.”(MIKP)

In the above excerpt from an Eastern participant, the leader expresses his role and responsibility towards his staff in that he needs to be a good role model by “walking the talk” and leading by example as he is aware that his staff members are watching and learning from what he actually does rather than just by what he says. The following excerpt by the CEO in M1KP’s firm suggest that M1KP’s integrity to live by his spiritual values is deeply admired and influences her own values.

“I still strongly believe in the spiritual philosophy held by M1KP although as the CEO of the firm I find his charitable nature has serious and problematic implications for our financial accounting, yet I have faith in his belief that if one helps others; ones’ own needs would be provided for by the Almighty..M1KP is a walking example in my life of this truth and he has shaped my own work and personal values to a large extent. I deeply appreciate and understand his work ethic and values and I have seen him in action especially in meetings with staff and clients. He integrates his spiritual values in everything that he does and is not afraid to live by his values” (M1CW1)

The above account by the CEO of the firm shows how despite finding the “whats” and “hows” of her work problematic due to her boss’s charitable nature, she firmly supports his ways, appreciating his spiritual philosophy in life to help others. It is a good example of when an employee appreciates ”why” the leader does what he does, even though that caused problematic scenarios to her own role as CEO, she admires and appreciates his value and admits that it has even influenced her own work values and ethics. In Chapter 6, the narrative by M1CW2 also provides evidence when there is value congruence between the leader and the co-workers there is greater engagement in their role. This participant highlighted how when he experienced value-conflict in a former place of employment, he would generally disengage or withdraw participation due to work values which conflicted morally and ethically with his own personal values.

“I have a sense of well-being in this firm and sometimes if I disagreed with M1KP I will voice my opinions. I think it’s a question of trust. I know in this firm there is a clear focus

on giving back to society and I cherish this value of working for a leader who is a good corporate citizen whom I can trust.” (M1CW2)

This employee, a Senior HR Advisor of the firm, in the above excerpt alludes to the climate of trust and well-being that exist between leader and staff member. This participant reiterates that M1KP being a man of faith to a good extent establishes and ensures good values and therefore the ability to trust such a leader even in conflict situation is enhanced. These examples display that a spiritually inspired leader has the ability to influence his workers but also create a climate of mutual respect and trust even in situations where conflict of opinions exists. Another staff member, the Financial Manager adds a further dimension to the trust climate as follows:

“My boss allows his staff to work independently, and believes and trusts in them. Because of his trust and appreciation, I feel I can’t take advantage of his kindness and it motivates me to be proactive to get things done without being told. I don’t want to let him down.”(M1CW3)

M1CW3 in the excerpt above displays her loyalty to M1KP saying she is proactive to get things done without even being asked to do so. It indicates how when a leader is loved and trusted, employees go to great extents to please their leader and reciprocate his trust and kindness.

The examples presented above indicate that the values of the workers in this organisation are being subliminally influenced by M1KP whose work values, which by his own admission, are unshakably rooted to his spiritual values. This case-study also highlighted that having a similar religious background seem to forge greater trust in what appears to be mutual trust based on the spirit of “Muslim brotherhood” as discussed by M1CW2 in his narrative. However, this point cannot be over-simplified as the sample size of this study did not justify such generalisation. However, other members of this organisation, (for e.g. M1CW3 and M1CW4 both of whom belong to a different religious faith) appear to confirm this level of trust exist in the organisation based on their own personal experiences with M1KP, hence suggesting that the influence of the leader cuts across religious boundaries (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1.4: Case-Study M1 –

Narratives from Co-workers (CWs). The discussion above answers RQ2, where it is clear that the work-values of the leader clearly influences the values of their co-workers, even in instances when there was conflict of belief, the co-workers had an agreeable attitude towards the values of their leader, because they seem to understand “*why*” he held those values which may have been different to their own. Thus, this exemplifies how a spiritually inspired leader is able to unite his followers by inspiring them with his own higher spiritual values even if it caused practical problems and were not pragmatic to typical profit driven motives of capitalist systems operating in an organisation. This finding is significant to illustrate the influence of the leader on work values of those he leads.

Among the key findings is that the search for inner meaning and purpose appears universal. There is growing body of evidence relating to RQ2 to suggest, that as people spend a significant amount of life at work, many expect to derive their social identities and values from their workplaces (Ros, Schwartz and Surkiss, 1999; Padaki, 2000, Roe and Ester 1999). Lord and Brown, (2001) discuss the linkage between leadership, values and subordinate self-concepts which in this study is seen clearly as co-workers drew meaning and purpose at work based on a mutual commitment to the key participant values at work, buying into MIKP’s higher goals. It was interesting to note that even when conflict of opinions arose among the leader’s key employees and himself, it did not corrode the strong trust that was present between them and there was a sense of safety and security to express these differences which strikes as a conducive outcome for new ideas, innovation and creativity to flow amongst the key players within that organisational setting. This findings support Brytting and Trollestad (2000) view that common values are the glue that binds an organisation together which motivate and create a sense of community and employees in such organisations can be trusted in the absence of direct rules and regulations.

The findings from the Eastern Case study M1 also indicate that although the spiritual aspiration of the key participant was culture-specific and bound in religious belief relevant to M1KP's own sacred Muslim heritage, it did not appear to offend others in the organisation who did not belong to the same tradition. The Administration and Finance manager in case-study M1, who held a different religious belief from M1KP, says;

“I feel a sense of connection with the boss and the rest of the staff members here. He is kind, cares for other people regardless of race, religion or age.” (MICW3)

Another temporary staff who was there in between a previous job she was retrenched from and looking for a more permanent position had this to say about M1KP;

“When I first came here, I realised I had to adjust to an Islamic work environment and was a bit nervous...and although I've been here only for a few short months,...I see my boss is so charitable, his contribution to society is so inspiring...he helps people from all walks of life. He is a very kind man. I trust him 100%...In my previous organisation, we never talk about anything other than sales, but here we speak about issues concerning humanity...and to consider our duties beyond the workplace...It has inspired me to offer more of my time and money to help the less fortunate too. I now volunteer at the local orphanages, but what I do does not compare to what M1KP does.”(MICW4)

The above narratives serve as testimonials to prove that an individual can be religious and spiritual at the same time – as in the case of M1KP, his personal exclusive (Islamic) religious practice is not an imposition on others, nor perceived to be a threat by others because his outward actions are all-inclusive towards people of all denominations. It is a case in point to suggest that religious belief which is an exclusive endeavour can co-exist with spiritual pursuit which is inclusive and boundless for aspirants. The narratives from co-workers show that the leader's personal spiritual values has a profound effect on his workers, leading them to adopt new values and transformative behaviours as they become inspired by the altruistic values of their leader..

In line with the earlier reference to the *whats, hows and whys* at work, these findings appear to lend support to Sinek's (2009) argument that when stake-holders buy into the 'why' factor, it

inspires transformative action. In the same light, the religious-spiritual dichotomy can be presented as follows. Religion is the ‘*what and how*’ and spirituality is the *why*. It is again demonstrated through the narratives above that when members of the organisation understand the leader’s inner *why* (spiritual) motives, the ‘*whats and hows*’ (external religious belief and practices) become less relevant or are rendered insignificant.

In concluding the discussion in this section, RQ2 is answered in the affirmative with ample evidence from the discussions above that the value-systems of the workers in an organisation can be inspired by the spiritual values of their leader. Despite surface-level differences, on what and how these values are practiced, the core spiritual reasoning (why) overrides any external differences that may or may not exist. Ros, Schwartz and Surkiss (1999) highlight that much of the literature on work values was developed without attention to the broader research on general values. This research offers plausible explanation that may connect work values within the broader spectrum of spiritual values.

7.3.2 Joyful experience of work – the all-important trust factor

Following from the previous section, it can be deduced that more and more people assign greater meaning and purpose in their lives through their career and vocations. Consequently, there is increasing expectation for the experience of work to be synchronously be more joyful as well. Dreary work environments cannot possibly provide much meaning or purpose to a person’s life and so progressive firms have ventured to engineer extrinsic and intrinsic values that could enhance experience of fun and joy at work. Famous examples would be the firms that vie for Fortune’s ‘100 Best Companies to Work for List’ topped by the firm Google for the years 2012 and 2013. The website cites that these firms on their list consistently outperform their competitors and their data over 25 years of research and surveys indicate that the single most important ingredient in making a workplace great was trust (Moskowitz, and Levering 2012).

Therefore an environment based on trust is critical for fun and enjoyment of work and yet as these authors describe, many organisations manage by destroying trust and managing through fear and stress (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000) and far more. Extreme examples exist of toxic environments at work (Frost, 2003).

Findings from this research indicate that spiritually inspired leader's indirectly contribute towards enhancing the experience of work for individuals. Frost and Robinson (1999) referred to leaders who buffer their workers from the toxic environments as 'toxic handlers', describing them as those who voluntarily shoulder the sadness, frustration, bitterness, and anger of others so that high-quality work continues to get done. To illustrate this point, a few examples are presented from both the Australian and Malaysian Case-studies on how these leaders act in ways that promote trust. One participant from the A1 case-study alluded to the fact that lack of trust in the organisation's banking environment encourages workers to look out only for themselves and safe-guard their immediate self-interest.

"We unfortunately have become overly litigious and cautious because we can't trust one another and this is very evident every time when we have something go wrong in the organisation. The level of defence and barriers from everybody just goes up one level...so even if I trust you based on what has happened to others in the past, I have to double, triple, quadruple check your work, which not only becomes inefficient, but it also builds barriers between people...During times of crisis,...people watch their own backs and abdicate their responsibility. But if there is mutual trust, and reliance upon one another, I think the organisation can be a lot more nimble and a lot more effective."(A1CW2)

This same participant from the A1 case-study highlights why A1KP is unique and presents his perception of the key participant (A1KP) whom he describes as follows:

"On average in my career of fifteen odd years, I'd say A1KP would be on an above average scale when it comes to the question of mutual trust and respect..I will put it down to a level of openness that A1KP has, and a non-hierarchical approach to things...also a level of mutual care that is being expressed for one another...and that helps working in

AIKP's team more enjoyable and so you come to work without the shadow of fear and you enjoy coming to work.” (A1CW2)

The narrative above captures clearly the damaging environment based on fear where it demoralises people, causing them to either withdraw from responsibility or become disengaged, thereby further entrenching negative fear-based values that harm others in the organisation. It also depicts how in moments of crisis in such environments, the concern for self-preservation overrides concern for the overall interest of the firm or other colleagues. It is in this climate that A1CW2 describes AIKP as a rarity, as he appears to take on the role of the toxic-handler in this Case-study. Further evidence were furnished by this participant (see Narrative by A1CW2 in Section 6.4.1.4b in Chapter 6) that clearly showed how the key participant had navigated through tough times in this banking environment, experiencing moments of personal strife and unhappiness, but only to carve out a respectable and suitable career aligned to his personal values over his long career at the bank.

Furthermore, AIKP informed the researcher that he draws from his own personal (bad) past experiences at the bank to assist his colleagues through tough moments that they may be experiencing from time to time. This quality of his quiet resilience and his triumphant story is a source of inspiration and admiration for his colleagues. In concluding his narrative on AIKP, A1CW2 captures the hopes and sentiments of all his colleagues when he said:

“As a final word, I'd like to say that AIKP is essentially a rarity in an organisation such as this. I don't want to over-exalt him, but certainly in an organisation like this, more of AIKPs would be great! That is a real compliment which comes down to his genuine care and respect of people which is one of his key traits.” (A1CW2)

This sub-section provided evidence to demonstrate how business firms often fail to treat people with dignity and respect, therefore carelessly creating work environments that threaten the security of employees, and in extreme cases, through fear-based policies cause emotional injury to employees.

This kind of organisational climate is counter-productive to the creativity and innovation mantra chanted by organisational theorist of the present era (Amabile, 1996)..As depicted further in the narrative, a single individual with the ‘right’ values within a difficult work environment can institute positive changes in their small circle of influence as in the A1 Case-study where a large part of the banking infrastructure is built around the prevention of fraudulent activities or things that are unethical and hence the over-reliance on security measures on many levels. Mainly, this is to achieve integrity of data and facts and many compliance issues requiring multiple levels of validation is apparently common within the banking sector. Within a ‘big-brother’ environment such as this, individual employees can become easily discouraged when mistakes can be traced back to source where the lack of trust and fear of over-sight causes unnecessary stress, and robs employees of their dignity and happiness at work.

There were many other occasions when this research confirmed the fundamental need to instil the value of trust in an organisation;

“Trust is built upon familiarity with a person’s trustworthiness over time. If a person walks the talk and consistently puts in an honest day’s work for his pay, then one can tell if you can trust an individual or not..I believe that all the good values such as honesty and integrity can be hard to measure or quantify, but a good yardstick I find is that a person who is religious or spiritual tend to have good values.”(MICW2)

This participant was alluding to the point that if a person was guided by spiritual or religious values, such a person is usually trustworthy. Findings reported in Chapter 6 seems to have the recurring theme of trust as a key value at work both from the angle of key participants, the business leaders and from the reciprocating angle of the other stakeholders interviewed, creating a trusting environment at the workplace. These discussions further validate RQ2 in that the spiritual values of the leader influences and impacts upon the value-system of his workers, inspiring and motivating employees at work and ultimately creating a conducive work environment based on trust and loyalty among co-workers.

7.3.3 Supporting inner work (RQ3)

This section addresses RQ3. It captures some of the spiritual dimensions observed or practiced in the workplace. Some spiritually-inspired leaders venture into supporting and motivating their staff members and colleagues with their personal spiritual values by instituting policies in their offices that helps staff members express their inner selves. For example, in the case of M1KP, Muslim staff members are encouraged to do their prayers during working hours. This was also highlighted in Phase I by business leaders such as ZMS and KM (discussed in Chapter 4), who indicated that these practices are prevalent and widely-accepted culture in the Malaysian context. Among the Western participants, AB had quarterly workshops for personal development of his staff in which they discuss inner soul issues and seek for ideas to spread love in the office (discussed in Chapter 4)..Also IK, informed that the five guiding principles held as Corporate Policy in his mining firm can all be linked to spiritual values (see Chapter 5:Section 5.4.3 for more detailed examples).

Many other examples of workplace practices that have been influenced by the spiritual dimension of the leader can be seen in the discussion in Chapter 5 under Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. These sections provide a variety of narrative examples of how workplace relations and culture are linked to the leader's spiritual values. A1KP for instance used a spiritual New Age book entitled a New Earth as a basis to do a number of presentations to his team at work. These are good examples to show how workplace value systems are influenced by the spiritual belief and value systems of their leaders. This discussion provides a clear answer for RQ3. The book used by A1KP was recommended to the participant by the researcher. It is also a good example to highlight that a Heuristic research process allows researcher and her subjects to influence and share knowledge, thus capturing the dynamic nature of the research process.

7.3.4 Connectedness and oneness – the humility factor (RQ3)

This section further address RQ3 in considering one of the key aspects of the spiritual dimension observed or practised at the workplace. The spirituality at work literature often refers to the term “connectedness” or “oneness” (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). In the world of business where quite often the “end justifies the means” ethos often prevails, firms tend to place business goals above all other considerations. Whether in their acts of either down or right-sizing, corporatizing; hiring, firing or retrenching staff; internationalising; centralising; sub-contracting; mergers or joint-ventures and a host of other business decisions, the underlying premise is based on the model for economic success, with the long-held rationale of high efficiency, low cost measures. Yet over the years, the most successful companies in the world, according to data compiled for the Fortune list (Moskowitz & Levering, 2012) consistently suggest that the firms that instil trust and place people values above all other economic imperative are the firms that seem to succeed in the marketplace. Pfeffer (2001, p.27) suggest that “an individual’s desire and right to be treated with dignity at work, to be able to grow, and to be a whole, integrated person cannot simply be sacrificed for economic expediency.” This implies that the idea of connectedness is a fundamental principle for worker wellness and productivity. Meaning, unless organisations invest in the good treatment of people, the consequent lack of trust would lead to lack of loyalty and productivity which ultimately limits an organisation’s ability for sustainable success.

In many spiritual philosophies the divine principle, which in the religious traditions of the world is called the God-factor, is supposedly the One Supreme Source that connects all beings of the world. To know the Creator of all Creations or “to know God” is the grand ultimate goal that every spiritual seeker hopes to achieve. Perceiving the imperceptible Creator is said to be possible through various meditative & devotional practices in the spiritual and religious movements, but in the material world, this understanding or goal often comes from resolute faith

in this belief-system on an Oneness principle. This is reflected in the following excerpt in the M2 case-study:

“Everything comes from the divine Creator, and so I always have an open mind to new possibilities. What I have learnt in this business was all taught to me by some great people who all had a strong divine energy in them. I have learnt from my mentors and now do the same with my own staff, teaching them all that I know.” (M1KP2)

The above excerpt displays the Oneness principle. The fact that this business leader held reverently to this concept allows her to possess a rather humble view of the world. She almost self-depreciatingly accords all her business knowledge and skill to mentors and spiritually inspired individuals before her, who taught her all she knows. Keeping to that same spirit, she continues to share her knowledge and grooms her current staff to take over the business someday. She explains her non-attachment to the fleeting nature of material possession, fame and name, saying she can drop all of it to pursue her next project in life.

This illustrates how an awareness of the concept of oneness and connectedness encourages a person to appreciate all that is bestowed upon them as coming from a connected source, paying due respect to others who have contributed directly and indirectly to their fortune (both good and bad). This sense of connectedness also encourages one to accord time and due respect to others who may be suitable to be groomed to become the next generation of leaders, instead of hoarding their knowledge and skills to egocentrically wield their power, these leaders extend all that they know by sharing their wise knowledge with others. They have little fear of losing their own position of power; instead they appear to express willingness to step-down and hand over the reign, when the time was right with an attitude of detachment to material wealth and possessions (see Chapter 6: Section 6.33 Self-disclosure by M2KP of Case-study M2.illustrates this point).

This finding is similar in result to the concept of the “Level Five Leader” by Jim Collins (2001) in his celebrated book “Good to Great”, one of the business book best sellers of all time.

In his study, Collins studied 11 companies with great performance and compared them to 11 companies in the same industry in the same period that did not perform well. One of the most interesting things he found was that the business leaders of the successful companies all exhibit the personal quality of humility and that the leaders of the not so successful companies all had huge personal egos. Thus, similar to the Level Five Leader, spiritually-inspired leaders have the ability to tame their personal egos and achieve results for their firms or causes they champion, without undue hankering for personal fame and fortune. Indeed, all the business leaders in this research displayed an endearing humility, a compelling modesty and are often self-effacing or understated.

Another good example was that of A1KP from the Australian case-study (see Section 6.4.1.2 on Self-disclosure by Key Participant A1KP). This is further augmented by an evaluation of A1KP by his current senior boss. The excerpt below proves this point when she speaks about the key participant A1KP:

“A1KP operates from a very strong value set – he is not an individual who would compromise how he feels based on his values or principles. He is also very high on empathy, so he is almost viewed almost as the “Wise Counsel” and my team would talk to him because I know he has a very strong element of integrity, he is very open and honest and he never ever betrays the trust of people. He is very emotive in that regard. His language can be somewhat self-deprecating not in the way of being hard on yourself but he comes from a strong sense of ‘it is a privilege that I’m working in the Academy’ when I’d say we hired you for your ability so stop thanking us for it. So his gratitude has sometimes led him to consider doing things that he doesn’t really want to do.” (A1CW5)

The above except displays the same paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will that was characterised by Collins (2001) of the Level Five Leader. It would be interesting to return to Collin’s study to see if his 11 Level Five Leaders were also spiritually inspired as there are strong parallels between the two, as discovered in this study.

To summarise, the discussions in this section hints at a key spiritual dimension which is the sense of Oneness or Connectedness to the Creator or God factor. Living by this principle, spiritually inspired individuals appear to have a heightened sense of connectedness to all things and beings. It results in a sense of humility due to knowing that each one is connected to the same life-giving principle. Although due to the small size of the sample, it cannot be generalised that all spiritually-inspired individuals would experience a similar range of heightened connection with others, in answering RQ3, this research within these sample limitations shows promise that the key concept of “Oneness” or “Connectedness” of the spiritual dimensions to be highly relevant and present within the three case-studies in this research. However, any conclusive statement on this issue would require a larger sample and a cross-comparison with leaders who may not be spiritually- inspired to see if they might also experience a sense of “oneness or connectedness” through other means. From a theoretical perspective, a systems view provides a framework to understand this phenomenon. Consistently, Shakun (2006) suggest that the Evolutionary Systems Design (ESD) framework provides a systems design that highlights an inherent high-level purpose shared by individuals to experience connectedness. According to Shakun, spiritual rationality which, he submits can facilitate right action through problem solving and negotiation can unite individuals who may be faith-based or secular-based to maintain connectedness and to problem-solve. Findings in this study appear consistent to this line of reasoning where a leader’s sense of connectedness to a spiritual ideal appear to inspire co-workers regardless of their spiritual, religious and secular denominations.

7.4 WORKPLACE INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUALLY-INSPIRED LEADERS – RQ4

The idea of having enhanced workplace behaviour and activity in organisations with spiritually-inspired leaders was the focus of RQ4. This section presents various findings which suggest that a workplace is positively influenced by the values of a spiritually inspired leader. In

this section the answer to RQ4 is clearly established. It looks at the degree to which a spiritually inspired leader is able to influence and enhance the workplace experience for himself and for his work-colleagues with behaviour and activity that makes work meaningful for all. This section provides various evidence to show the increased motivation and satisfaction felt amongst colleagues at work, who were inspired by the integrity and work-values of a spiritually inspired leader which creates an atmosphere of trust and collegiality.

7.4.1 Conflict resolution – the fairness and equity factor

Nowhere is a spiritually inspired leader more relevant and significant than in managing tense or difficult challenging moments within organisational life. The findings in this study presented many examples of how spiritually-inspired leaders appeared to have graceful mastery in handling or resolving conflict moments in their role as leaders. One example cited earlier from the M2 case-study depicted a calm and collected leader dealing with an intense moment when a business thug was behaving intimidatingly at the office premises and M2KP managed the situation first and foremost with formidable courage and with utmost care, by securing the safety of her staff and the researcher, who was by chance conducting field-work within her office premises that fateful day. Other examples worthy of mention include the way A1KP defends members of his organisation, representing their interest and protecting them from unfair political statements made at appraisal meetings rating, their performance in their absence. Word of his noble actions travels through the grapevine of the organisation (as they typically do), leading to him being broadly respected and held in high esteem by workmates and colleagues in the organisation (see narratives by A1CW1 and A1CW2.in Section 6.4.1.4a and 6.4.1.4b for detailed accounts of this.in Chapter 6). A1KP's fairness and stand for justice of others in forums where conflicting opinions cloud judgments, and political agendas makes for uneven playing fields in the boardroom, makes the presence of this value-anchored leader deeply appreciated by those

who lack the voice to air their opinions in such situations. One co-worker to A1KP had the following comments:

“The only other thing I would say about A1KP, is that he has an important quality in his dynamic, in that he actually won’t buy into the politics at the workplace, which is great, which is good, that is a really positive thing...so he kind of role models in a really constructive principled purposeful way of being...I know some people here in our system will say he is losing out because...he is not on the traditional lucrative scale...that is a traditional demarcation of one’s success in this environment. But if you ask me... I think if you ask me doing work that you really feel engaged in and feeling that you are making a difference and I see A1KP operating from the latter credo.” (A1CW2)

A1KP earns the admiration of others and fosters trust and is seen as a beacon of integrity that helps to illuminate facts and truth in environments that can easily become destructive due to excessive competition between members in the race for recognition and reward in the organisation. His presence and conflict resolution style also engenders progress and positive change in behaviour instead of shutting people down A1KP is reputed to use a very constructive and open approach to conflict resolution. The above excerpt also displays the admiration and respect he earned from his colleagues for his conflict resolution capacity and personal integrity.

7.4.2 Authentically caring – the inspirational factor

Findings in all three case-studies highlighted the authentic care felt by these business leaders towards their co-workers. To illustrate this point, in case-study M2, the caring nature of M2KP, depicting her genuine care for her staff members, whom she treated as family members, was very obvious. Her office workers were often invited to her home to share meals and celebrate auspicious occasions. She also helped out with interest-free loans when her workers ran into financial difficulties. One example was cited by M2CW1 to illustrate M2KP’s caring nature:

“Recently when my father was involved in a road accident and I had to take ten days leave just to take care of dad and attend to matters at home, M2KP not only called me daily to check how my dad was recuperating, but she also supported my family by

extending us a personal loan. Then on another occasion, I was admitted to the hospital for a viral fever and she even visited me in the hospital. These are some examples that I can share with you; there are many more reasons why I feel good and proud to work for M2KP. She is humble and very kind and yet very professional at the same time.”(M2CW1)

Granted M2 being a small business enterprise where the leader can establish personal relationships with members of their organisation and their extended families, the example may strike as unusual or impractical in large organisations where a leader may not have the luxury of time nor resources to get to know staff members on such a personal note. However, the point being made here is to depict the sincere and caring nature of a leader who extends a certain kindness and compassion for staff ill-stricken with health or family related issues. This research participant unabashedly glorifies his boss, seeing her as his mentor and role model to be a better human-being and confides that due to M2KP’s caring attitude, he says he always wants to try harder at work to meet or exceed her expectations.

7.4.3 Challenging business environments – ethics and integrity factor

Working in highly political, professional and competitive work environments can test individuals on many levels, none more so when there is a financial or economic gain to be had. In these highly volatile environments, it is not uncommon for the average self-promoting ego driven individuals to seek out name and fame at any cost, often compromising their own moral codes, if they had any in the first place. This study provided many examples where spiritually inspired business leaders made unpopular decisions even if it meant having to undergo personal pain or self-sacrifice in order not to compromise on their deeply held personal values. Their integrity in critical moments stands them in good stead amongst their followers because they are deeply respected for making principle-centred decisions. This was clearly derived from data collected in M1 and M2 case-studies where both the key participants and many of their co-workers, through their independent interviews appear to have a corroborated account of disturbing events which

revealed the shadow side of business environments where players use unethical or unfair business strategies to get ahead of competition. These were documented in detail within both case studies where value-conflict arises when key participants were faced with occasionally corrupt business environments (See narratives by co-workers in sections 6.3.1.4a, 6.3.1.4b, and 6.3.3.4a in Chapter 6). In the Australian case-study rather than implying a corrupt business environment, results show that due to a highly competitive business environment, there can be finger-pointing and poor accountability in a highly political work-environment. In some cases individuals can resort to underhand tactics to compete against each other, rather than trust or support one another in the race to get ahead in the competition for material success. (see narratives by co-workers in sections 6.4.1.4a, b, c and d in Chapter 6).

Both M1KP and M2KP recognise that their ability to engage in such environments is constrained due to their spiritual, personal and work values that are challenged in such environments. Instead of bending to pressure, these business leaders made choices that would disadvantage them personally, but having stood against erroneous forces in their industry, they earn the high respect and accolade of their followers and comrades and their integrity to grit through painful decisions eventually pays off handsomely, sometimes over long extended periods of patience and will to play by the rules. The Australian case-study also produces similar findings when A1KP in his organisation bore the brunt of unfair criticism of his superiors when a project he headed many years ago failed to yield the results expected. Instead of playing the blame-game, A1KP had stood up and taken full-responsibility for the failed project as the following excerpt illustrates:

“When things go wrong, there is always all kinds of blaming and finger-pointing happening. Being the owner of the project, A1KP had to bear a lot of that directly and indirectly. In many heated moments, A1KP had to respond and work-out how to keep things moving through, despite personal attacks, criticisms and defamation. That’s when I

noticed AIKPs ability to keep calm in dealing with difficult situations and keep his head up and keep moving on.” (A1CW2)

Bell, Taylor and Driscoll (2011) argue that to fully appreciate ethical implications, religious organisational beliefs must be located within their relevant cultural and material context and this is found to be true in this research where between the two Western and Eastern cohorts, ethical frameworks are related to the acceptable and non-acceptable norms in the larger cultural fabric. In the Malaysian context, participants spoke more openly about ethical breaches and corrupt business environments, but in the Australian context, which in this case was located in a banking sector, it was understandable that participants exercised discreet caution in speaking about “irregularities” and tend to rely on highly formalised regulated forums on ethical matters.

The excerpts above point to suggest that spiritually-inspired leaders discussed in this study appear to anchor and act from an internal locus of control. The excerpt above again points to how a spiritually inspired leader anchored and acting from an internal locus of control tend to avoid the pitfalls of ego-boosting or ego-damaging behaviour to remain true to the cause of his work. Even in difficult circumstances with odds stacked against the leader, a spiritually inspired leader is able to cope and act with integrity even if the issue at hand is explosive or unethical, with the potential to cause great emotional harm. These leaders are known to withdraw to an inner space to make calculated judgements and often emerge victorious in the long run. Such was the case of AIKP who records various challenging moments throughout his long career at the bank. He however, has managed almost single-handedly to carve a career that suits his personal values and character. In the process, he has become a great inspiration to many others who admire his will and grit to emerge through challenging moments, without compromising on his own personal value systems. It gives him and others in the organisation great inspiration to have dealt with difficult circumstances with integrity and be appreciated and rewarded for his contributions to the organisation in the long-term, having dealt with tough and sometimes unethical forces within

organisational systems in the past. His story which he shares with his colleagues in the Leadership Academy for leadership training and development purposes, gives hope and faith to leadership trainees, encouraging them to see that even if a system may appear broken or corrupt in the moment, staying true to ethical principles of operations is the right approach for long-term sustainable success. A1KP's triumph in his personal career is inspiring. More importantly it provides evidence to suggest that the application of spiritual-based values can be a foundation to influence individual and institutional values and potentially enhance long-term sustainable success.

7.4.4 Decision-making guided by tacit knowledge

The essence of every leader's job is decision-making and inspiring their followers. Shakun (1999, 2001) explores how leaders arrive at the "right" decision based on an inner consciousness and spirituality termed as "unbounded rationality". It is explained that when reasonable cognitive decisions is met with doubt, individuals reverted to a tacit dimension for making sense. Shakun (2001) insist that the right decision is not only bounded by cognition, but also by affection and 'conation' which is clarified to be the connection of knowledge and affect to behaviour, and therefore is associated to the question of 'why' (Huitt and Cain 2005). 'Conation', according to Kane (1985), is a concept closely associated with the concept of intrinsic motivation, volition, agency, self-direction and self-regulation. Fernando & Jackson (2006) surmise therefore that 'right' decision-making is rational and reasonable not only in terms of achieving goals of cognitive ability, but also in terms of the ability to "experience and act according to a connection with a larger ultimate whole"(p.32).

The discussion above lead to the point that a spiritually inspired leader is a product of the times whereby the growing trends for conscious leadership, and rise in human consciousness is being expressed in an increased interest and reliance on tacit spiritual knowledge (Aburdeen,

2005). New ideas bridging the world of science and spirituality by neuroscientist and spiritual masters are suggesting that the brain of a human is capable of re-wiring itself to become what is called the super-brain highlighting that spiritual practices such as meditation can be highly useful to obtain optimum physical, mental and spiritual well-being (Tanzi and Chopra, 2012). Several themes in this research resonate closely with this idea. Every key participant in this research had a regular or sustained spiritual practice such as meditation or prayer that they claim provides them with clarity of thought, particularly when making difficult decisions. Participants also report that they are able to maintain a sense of peace and calm particularly when confronted with chaotic or unpredictable scenarios when making decisions in their role as leaders in a business organisation. Earlier sections in this discussion chapter have already given ample evidence of these. It goes to prove that decision-making guided by tacit knowledge is a common occurrence and in the case of spiritually-inspired leaders who have meditational or prayerful insight, the ability to make creative, innovative and inspiring decisions are heightened due to their ability to draw from such a tacit spiritual inner dimension (beyond rational thought, or emotional feelings) that only recently is being acknowledged as relevant by the scientific community.

7.4.5 Sustainable business practice

According to Barnett, Krell & Sendry (2000), the enormous attention amongst the academic and practitioner communities towards spirituality in business is shifting the traditional management paradigm to include a more holistic model. They claim this movement has serious implications for business school educators in that the traditional areas of values, goals, motivation, and ethics in management courses are no longer sufficient, arguing that it was time for inclusion of the spiritual imperative. “The spiritual imperative is that management education must engage students in self-discovery about the inner energies of the soul, their connections to personal and professional development, and their contributions to social and economic evolution”

(2000,p.563). Yet it is still a big question mark if business schools respond to this vital need for educating business students with a true focus on self-awareness, or are these schools simply making token attempts to place ethics into their curriculum and expect to produce value-driven leaders on the other end of their supply chain. The increasing number of reports of corporate fraud gives reason to suspect that business school faculty are untrained in ethics (let alone spiritual philosophy), or the philosophy faculty are possibly neither trained nor interested in business education. This study has made a modest contribution in attempting to bridge this gap through this inter-disciplinary research effort.

7.4.6 Negotiating unethical corrupt business climate

Business leaders who are more spiritually aware and committed to their spiritual values often face serious value-conflict especially when negotiating business climates which are unethical or corrupt and lacking in values. It suggest that while an individual person in a position of power may uphold strong values, yet the terrain in which they operate can be quite unfavourable for the practical pursuance of their own preferred values in business. The reality behind the public gloss is that spiritually-inspired leaders have to contend with stakeholders in the system who may not share their noble ideals. This means they often encounter a world of business of hardball politics with wheelers and dealers, self-interested elites, hostile competition and unpredictable attacks. This reality was clearly depicted in both the Malaysian case-studies which reflected not only through the key respondents but also came through the narratives with their co-workers.

In the M2 case, the researcher personally witnessed a violent attack of thugs employed to use scare-tactics and cause havoc to the participant's office and the researcher inadvertently became privy to unfolding drama and the realities of unpredictable violence. In this scenario, the dire situation forced the researcher to become a participant observer of the lock-down scenario at

M2KP's office where the researcher became innocently trapped in the fray of events that unfolded before her very eyes. Admittedly, it was a scary experience and the researcher recalls how while her internal nerves were seriously rattled, she herself was able to stay calm by watching the cool and collected response displayed by the key informant who acted with precise motion and accurate judgement for what was a non-rational and unreasonable circumstance.

M2KP later confides to the researcher that although she too was feeling fear, particularly for the safety of her office-workers whom she was responsible for, she was able to act in a calm manner on the surface because of her inner faith in her divinity. The researcher observed M2KP first pray at the altar in her office before ringing the police and her husband. This same participant also bore the brunt of media manipulation in a hostile business environment where she coped with a wide variety of unethical business practices, depicted in some detail in her self-disclosure in section 6.3.3.2 in Chapter 6. Evidently, in some parts of the world, the idea of a value-driven, sustainable and ethical business remains extremely challenging even for the most spiritual of aspirants. The reality is that for these business leaders to remain viable in their business, they need to continuously learn how to play stakeholder politics as discussed by Freeman (1994).

So while spirituality is often thought to bring peace, bliss and contentment to the inner world of the individuals, the reality cannot be more different as business leaders in their positions of power deal with an outer world of polar opposites. However, the point made here is that it is the spiritually moored leaders who are able to negotiate these difficult business terrains in a responsible way that brings hope to those who lack the power to execute any positive change. An individual who is spiritual may be inwardly tormented by the unethical and corrupt realities of the world, but at least he or she has a certain sense of inclusiveness and care for others beyond his or her own selfish business agenda as depicted in the two Malaysian case studies. Both M1KP

and M2KP despite relating disheartening accounts of the corrupt world of business they engage in, each in their own way continue to strive within modest but far-reaching ways to champion the causes and needs others. It provides a glimmer of hope in environments which seem irrepressible, and yet within the walls of their inner circle of influence, of co-workers and friends and family and communities they engage with, these leaders remain highly inspiring, deeply respected and much loved by those who know them well for their strong inner resolve and will to persevere in unpleasant roles as leaders. These leaders have a huge impact in creating pockets of cultural integrity even within a larger system of dark and sinister climates and these small pockets of hope always inspires people to strive beyond unfavourable current realities no matter how bleak, for a better future.

The case-studies in Chapter 6 provide ample evidence of how people, whether they are co-workers, family members, or casual associates, all look up to spiritual leaders as “wise elders” for guidance and hope. It was a feeling that was consistently shared by most participants in all the three case-studies. It shows that the admiration (mostly private and rarely announced) for these respective leaders is present among their workers and colleagues. Except for one colleague who informed she openly shared her views with the key informant, the rest rarely exhibited or shared among colleagues their true feelings about their leaders. These findings challenges the concern by some authors who argue that spirituality at work may promote constricting cultural and behavioural norms and may “seek to reinforce the power of leaders at the expense of autonomy of their followers” (Tourish, 2013, p.59). The findings from this section indicate otherwise, that even in corrupt business environments, spiritually-inspired leaders, protect the interest of their workers and aim to act with integrity. This study provides ample evidence to show how these leaders are genuinely loved, respected and supported by their peers and followers at the workplace. Thus in answering RQ4 in the preceding discussions, there is generous evidence to

suggest that for both the leader and the people that he/she leads, the spiritual dimensions bring to bear a positive influence in enhancing the workplace behaviour and activity.

7.5 TRANSFORMING BUSINESS BY TRANSFORMING INDIVIDUALS

The crusade for humanisation of work environments has been raging in business managerial circles with the intent of creating more meaningful work, improved work environments, fairer and equitable reward systems and a deeper appreciation of the various human needs at work beyond the economic imperative. Brytting and Trollestad (2000) explain that leading by values or value-based management is not a matter of creating ethical codes or common values. Instead they argue that it is the art of inspiring groups and individuals to reflect and become aware of some moral assumptions needed for organisational success. They assert that values that are the glue that binds an organisation together, creating a sense of community and belonging.

This research has advanced this idea by highlighting highlighting that spiritual values play an important role in helping leaders establish inspiring value-based leadership that is not made cumbersome by rules and regulations. Clearly, to make any conclusive statement, comparisons need to be drawn with a “spiritually-uninspired” sample that are more likely to rely on typical rule-based management and leadership styles. However, this research presents an optimistic result though limited to a small sample size of only 3 case-studies, that spiritual based values appear to be a be very potent in inspiring positive work-values in co-workers. Figure 7.9 presents a model of the full dimensions of a spiritually inspired leader. It shows the full spectrum of the leaders’ tacit inner realms and their outer extrinsic impact upon others in their relationships, with a special focus on their impact on co-workers captured and presented diagrammatically. It depicts the in-depth full profile of the human dimensions anchored on core spiritual values and encapsulates the full findings of this study, highlighting how the inner spiritual dimensions of a

business leader has a strong influence upon their physical, psychological and social dimensions. A business leader with a strong spiritual mooring appears to have distinctive attributes that places them apart from others in the way they lead in an organisational setting. These findings are useful to provide an understanding on why spiritually-inspired leaders make for better leaders in the current and future era.

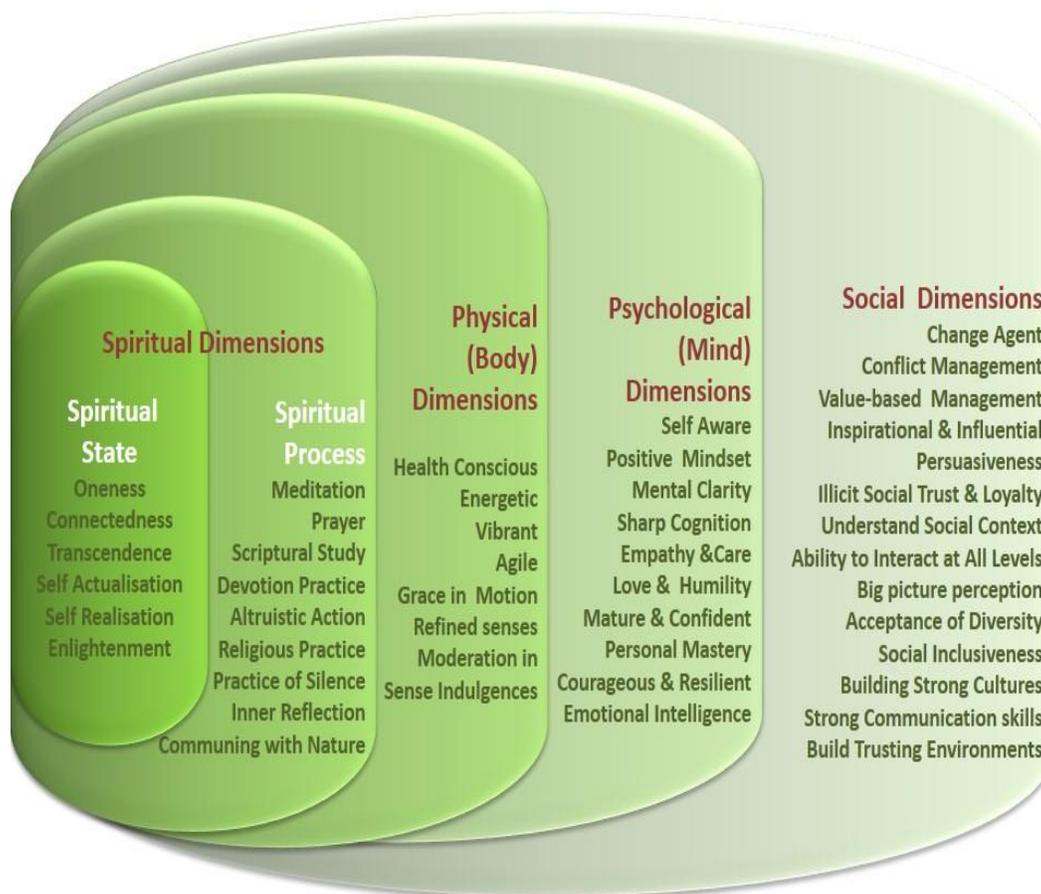


Figure 7.9 In-depth Profile of Spiritually-Inspired Leaders

As business leaders in an increasing complex world, they wield great power in their capacity to impact masses of people in a global economy. According to Fry (2003), the ultimate effect of spiritual leadership is to bring together or create a sense of fusion among the four

fundamental forces of human existence (body, mind, heart and spirit) for greater performance, commitment and personal satisfaction at work. In this study these four forces of human existence is described as the four dimensions of an individual personality and spirituality is presented to be a core locus point for individuals to experience a sense of balance, meaning and satisfaction in their human existence .

This research provides a compelling case for the alignment of business leaders with the fundamentals of a deep spiritual awareness or consciousness to ensure a leadership model based on humane and sustainable principles. A spiritually aware leader anchored in a spiritual state or process appears to exhibit greater clarity and courage to deal with the challenges of an ever-changing business landscape, with a level of poise, calm and composure even in the face of adversity. The tenacity to make tough decisions and at the same time maintain a level of empathy for all concerned with a unique blend of firm will and humility makes them very unique leaders, admired for their integrity and loved for their innate wisdom and compassion. As a result, they create high trust environments where colleagues and workers appear to voluntarily pledge loyalty towards these leaders. This also creates an environment of social inclusiveness, where members feel valued, respected and validated.

While acknowledging no generalisation can be made until further comparative evaluation is conducted between a cross-section of leaders who are spiritually inspired and spiritually uninspired to arrive at any concrete justification, it can however be said that the findings in this research despite its small sample shows good promise that tacit spiritual values held by spiritually-inspired leaders appear to promote greater meaning, purpose and motivation to inspire worker satisfaction at the workplace. The final section 7.6 in this Chapter will attempt to summarise the key findings of this research and propose an effective model (see Figure 7.10) for transformation of work environments based on a socio-spiritual paradigm.

7.6 EMBRACING SPIRITUAL LESSONS OF EAST AND WEST

7.6.1 Lessons from the East and the West

Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009) highlight that although most leadership research and theory has been developed and tested within a Western context; there is a growing need for cross-cultural context to be developed in leadership theory particularly due to the globalisation of organisations. Indeed, more and more business leaders are needed to operate across a wide range of international and cross-cultural locations. The research findings from this study make a significant contribution to address this gap.

In his historical evaluation of science and religion, Brooke (1991) informs that the scientific enterprise was legitimated by agreed testing and procedures whereas the theological enterprise has been characterised by dogmatism which required worship, ceremony and sacrifice, forms of activity alien to Western science. It explains the long historical resistance in the West where the assumption that educated scientific-minded are more inclined to reject beliefs that posit super-natural forces or belief systems. This implies that the more educated people would tend to be less religious or spiritual. This viewpoints are indeed shifting in recent times. The results from the Eastern sample and to some lesser extent even that of the Western sample challenges this viewpoint. Most of the participants in this research were highly educated with tertiary level education and yet all of the participants held strongly to some religious or spiritual belief.

AZ, a participant, from the business consultant Eastern cohort (see Chapter 5), highlights the fact that the separation of the Church from the State that occurred in the West is not a world-wide phenomenon. He thus explains how particularly in most parts of the Eastern world, religious traditions and practices remain culturally entrenched as those traditions are continuously handed down through the generations, through socio-cultural and religious structures. While some ancient rites and rituals are no longer relevant, the wisdom of the ages is carried forth through

one generation to the next due to the religious traditions. So while some may argue that religion was derived of irrational human fears and anxieties, on the contrary the results from the Eastern sample suggest that those who held a religious or spiritual belief seem to find strength to allay their fears and anxieties and to act with objective rationality drawing strength from deeply held religious values that guide moral code of conduct in the external world.

The idea that the educated would be less inclined to be religious is subject to question like many theoretical scientific arguments that require abstract thinking. Religious and spiritual belief similarly requires faith from educated persons capable of speculative reasoning. A deep level of inquiry is equally needed for philosophical questioning as it is needed for intellectual inquiry. Thus, the more educated are more likely to be more able or willing to make the abstractions needed to support religious or spiritual beliefs. This argument clearly supports the rebuttal that the more educated are less spiritual or religious. Quite the opposite, the more educated persons may be more capable with rational thinking to discriminate between mere false superstitious beliefs from sound philosophical reasoning of tacit dimensions involving abstract thinking of intangible phenomena.

This explains how the learning of religious and spiritual concepts that occur in most religious teachings and practice encourage the thinking person to reason and rationalise for themselves at an early age. This is the practice and tradition in many Eastern worlds where parents send young children for religious education or involve them in religious ceremonies. Thus, there is not just greater openness to the tacit dimension but equally critical judgement about what is relevant or not as seen with the M1 case-study where MIKP as a young man had begun questioning and reconciling his religious teachings with what he was actually experiencing in his life (See Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1.2).

This study concludes that the differences between the Eastern and Western cohorts appear to be fairly superficial as the more important work values arising from a spiritual belief or value appears consistent across both cohorts. The personal and workplace values were almost universally similar and the impact of these leaders on their co-workers and work-environments was seen to be positive in both the East and the West. Thus the overt and covert differences in freedom of expression on matters concerning spirituality or religion between the Eastern and Western subjects can be put down to cultural and historical differences between the two settings. It further validates the universality of spiritual principles and values to be relevant to all, regardless of creed, religion or region.

7.7 MODEL OF A SOCIO-SPIRITUAL PARADIGM

One of the key aims of this research was to demystify the concept of spirituality from its confusing categorisation as a mystical theological concept. Effort has been taken to demarcate between the difference and links between the concepts of spirituality and religiosity in this study with the intention to lay to rest the tensions and discomfort felt across many scholarly discussions on this subject. This study has taken a keen measure to validate the significance of both these concepts in varying cultural context of the East and West. More importantly, it has ventured to highlight the universality and significance of spiritual precepts relevant to human life. Indeed without a spiritual dimension, there is no life as it is the elusive life-giving principle that is cloaked in human consciousness. Thus the fog around spirituality is cleared to reveal in this research that the resistance to spiritual or for that matter religious edifice is unnecessary. Its relevance in human endeavours, such as within the business world, is becoming hard to ignore.

This research clarified that part of the problem is due to reductionist scientific methods that require fragmentising a piece of knowledge to manageable bites. Yet, any keen spiritual aspirant and practitioner will revolt at the idea of compartmentalising the immense magnitude of the all-

encompassing spirit, described as God in many traditions. Thus the futility of defining this concept was pragmatically explained and abandoned in this research, focussing instead on understanding how it manifest and influences human life within the business domains. Much of the criticism around the study of workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership remain around the lack of clear definition on what constitutes spirituality (Benefiel, 2005). This research contends that the value of understanding spirituality is not in its definition but more in its relevance and manifestations within human systems which has been amply demonstrated in the findings of this research.

Laying the issue of definitions to rest, this research focussed on developing a Model to present the relevant components of the socio-spiritual paradigm. The literature on spiritual leadership does not provide an extensive range of conceptual theory to explain spirituality for its own profoundness as scholars remain sceptical with the challenges surrounding the lack of clear definition of the subject for research and theory building (Dent Higgins and Wharff, 2005). Yet there has been various attempts to offer plausible theoretical models to capture the elusive subject by forming reasonable causal or interrelationship linkages to other life domains, such as work life, family life and community life showing spirituality as a construct that is positively related to all the various life domains (Lee, Sirgy, Eraty and Siegel, 2003; Emmons, 1999; Emmons, Cheung and Tehrani, 1998) and hence, these authors suggest that a spiritual striving appear to ‘sanctify’ important goals in life, improving overall life satisfaction. Other prolific scholars in this field such as Fry (2005a) looked at the intrinsic motivation of the leader and follower through a model that included a sense of calling and membership. This sense of calling on the part of leader according to Fry (2005a) establishes organisational cultures based on altruistic love for a sense of meaning and purpose for both leaders and followers in the workplace leading to commitment and productivity at work. Fry’s spiritual leadership model is inclusive of religious, ethics and value-

based imperatives. This study having taken a cross-cultural approach makes its contribution in further extending the field of workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership by presenting an in-depth look at the profile of a spiritually inspired leader and their impact on co-workers at the workplace. These findings are presented in the following Figure 7.10 as a socio spiritual paradigm.

This study explored the reasons that led to a spiritual striving, and ventured to depict the various spiritual processes in terms of practices that these research participants employed to maintain a tacit spiritual core which acted as an anchor to balance and stabilise their engagements in the extrinsic world. The model presented in this study captures the intense sustained process involved at the tacit dimension, in which an individual, conscious of the value of a deep spiritual mooring, regularly engages in reflective practices such as meditation, devotional activities or reflective inner processes which strengthens the spiritual conscience and core of the individual. This inner tacit process is often personal and private, cloaked in practices that are culturally embedded, whether religious or spiritual. With this strong inner spiritual core, the individual is able to balance their inner-outer engagements intelligently with a strong positive value set.

For business leaders studied in this research, it deeply aided their decision-making roles based on ethical and moral principles which arised from a strong spiritual intelligence. It is important to note that these individuals were concious of the fact that the spiritual dimension, though present in all humans, needs to be honed. Therefore they made unique culture-specific attempts to maintain a spiritual practice that continuously evolved them onto higher or deeper spiritual moorings. This included regulating their physical, psychological and social dimensions to support their deepening spiritual core states. It displays how the spirituality of a person is interdependent on experiences within all their human dimensions (physical, psychological, social and spiritual).

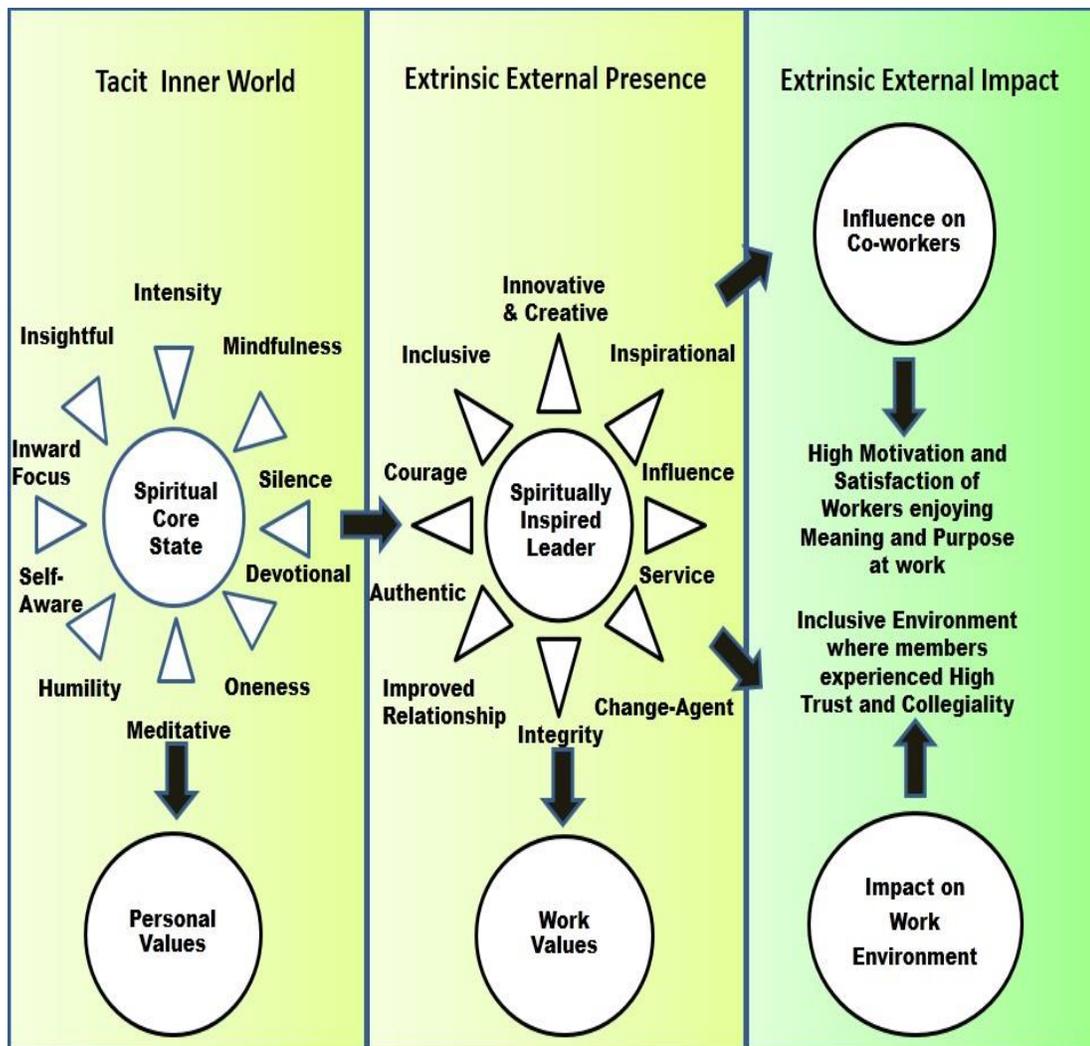


Figure 7.10 Socio-Spiritual Paradigm

The model also portrays the work values of the business leader which in this study showed great congruence to their own personal values which in their own admission was derived from their spiritual core beliefs. Here the values in this model compares favorably to Karakas' (2010b) nine spiritual anchors framework which he derived from the Sufi spiritual tradition. This research differs on the point that the participants represent a variety of religious and spiritual denominations, providing a further depth to Karaka's single dimensional address. However consistent to Karaka's argument, the values from his research findings indicate strong congruence

to findings of this research in that the influence these leaders had in the workplace, the values that they espoused were of similar distinctions..In this study these leaders displayed many values that was consistent to that of highly inspirational and visionary leaders able to reinvent themselves continuously adapting to their changing needs of the time. They went about their work with little care for name and fame, displaying a high level of will and humility.

Mostly, they functioned out of an altruistic value-set that displayed their integrity and ability to lead from an inner-directed mission, relating to their workers with authentic care and empathy, resulting in a strong learning environment based on inclusiveness, trust and collegiality. As a result, their colleagues and associates report a high level of motivation and job satisfaction working alongside spiritually-inspired leaders who bring a deeper meaning and purpose to their work environments where there is a high level of trust and sense of inclusive belonging. An important contribution made by this Heuristic design is the understanding that it takes conscious application to maintain a sense of inner spiritual serenity through regular and active practice depicted in the 1st column in Figure 7.10. It implies that the noble qualities professed by the major religious traditions and new age spiritualities is thought to be within the reach of every human being, except with the caveat, that it takes a fairly regular and dedicated faith-based devotional or meditative self-reflective practices to reap the benefits of being authentic on a spiritual path. Indeed for business leaders in this study and all who are interested in the evolution of their higher selves, the message points to regular and dedicated spiritual practice through any variety of spiritual means towards this high ideal. For some, this may be through prayer, devotional activities, and various forms of group practice and for others the path is personal, individual for example through, meditation, ecstatic experiences, scriptural study etc. This study found these results to be consistent regardless of Eastern or Western cultural settings, thus presents the Socio-spiritual paradigm in Figure 7.10 as applicable universally. This socio-

spiritual model has attempted to capture a comprehensive view comprising the personal, social and organisational aspects of a spiritually inspired leader within the context of a business organisation.

7.8 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed findings of Phase I and II of this research. In the discussions surrounding RQ1 it was established that various attributes and practices set a spiritually inspired leader apart from other leaders. The remaining RQs provided compelling evidence to believe that a spiritually inspired leader brings a positive influence on the overall work environment creating a climate of trust, inclusiveness, strong communication and relationships. East or West, these fine qualities that spiritually inspired individuals possess contribute towards the evolution of a more conscious workplace where workers are highly motivated and satisfied to perform in the interest and cause of the leader who inspires them.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The crisis is in our consciousness, not the world

J.K. Krishnamurti

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was initiated more than a decade ago. At that time, as noted in the first two chapters, the study of spirituality within the discipline of business management was at its infancy and was rapidly advancing. It is acknowledged that this research, which was initially conceived as an exploratory study, has benefitted from a more solid understanding through new research generated over the past decade. It is duly acknowledged that much more scholarly work has contributed significantly towards establishing the relevance and importance of spirituality in business management. This cross-cultural research on spirituality in the workplace was undertaken to provide a theoretical, methodological and practical contribution towards understanding how single individuals such as the business leaders studied in this research, are able to leverage on the tacit dimension of spirituality to bring a positive influence and impact on the workplace.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows. Section 8.2 summarises the research study recounting the research problem and objectives that led to the four research questions, detailing also the design of the study. Following this, the key research contributions are presented through the findings related to the four specific research questions in Section 8.3. Next, Section 8.4 provides discussions on how these findings add to the existing literature on spirituality in the workplace. These include discussions on theoretical, methodological and practical contributions. Section 8.5 presents the limitations of this study, followed by Section 8.6 with recommendations

for future research in this field. Finally, Section 8.7 ends with the author's reflections on the significance of spirituality within the business domain.

8.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH STUDY

This thesis set out to address the problem that business environments of the present day which are complex, challenging and dynamic fraught with ethical dilemmas and beset with emerging needs for meaning and purpose at work. Spiritually aware business leaders and managers from uniquely divergent Eastern and Western backgrounds were studied to see how their spiritual values or beliefs influence behaviour, activity and relations at the workplace. This research problem was identified and elaborated in-depth in Chapter 1 and are aimed at meeting the following two research objectives;

1. Firstly to establish if there was awareness of tacit spiritual values that promotes greater meaning, purpose, and motivation and worker satisfaction at the workplace.
2. Secondly, to propose an effective model for transformation of work environment based on a socio-spiritual paradigm.

Four research questions were developed to address these two research objectives as follows:

1. How aware are key managers/leaders of their own spiritual beliefs and values?
2. What are some of the workplace value systems observed among organisational members?
3. What are some of the spiritual dimensions observed/practiced in the workplace?
4. To what degree have spiritual dimensions influenced and/or enhanced workplace behaviour and activity.

A total of fifty seven individuals from a variety of religious and spiritual backgrounds provided insights into this research in the Pilot, Phase I and Phase II of this study which was conducted in Malaysia and Australia to represent East and West. It included 16 business leaders, (4 of whom participated in the pilot, 12 in Phase I from which 3 went on to become key participants in Phase II), 11 family members, 15 co-workers, over 11 casual informants (who were associated with the 3 key participants in Phase II) and also 4 business consultants.

The first research question addressed in Phase I firmly established that the main participants ($n=12$) in this research were business leaders who had a high level of awareness or consciousness based on spiritual values and were committed to their spiritual growth in both their personal and professional lives through regular and committed spiritual practice. The remaining three research questions were investigated in Phase II through case-studies. The results indicate that a business leader's inner tacit spiritual values are felt across the workplace context through their displayed actions and their engagement with stakeholders within their work domains. The contributions made from answering these four research questions are presented in the following sections.

8.3 KEY RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

8.3.1 Phase I: RQ1 – Spiritually-inspired business leaders

Phase I of this research ventured to explore the tacit spiritual dimensions of the business leaders with an aim to understand how it manifests in each individual.

8.3.1.1 Profile of spiritually-inspired leaders

Based on the findings from Phase 1, a composite picture was drawn as depicted in Figure 7.8. in Chapter 7 to profile the spiritually inspired leader. The source (X-factor) that was referred to as “God” or “Self” or the ‘Higher Self’ while others call “Spirit” or “Love” is recognised to be

a limitless “spiritual source”, a life-giving meaningful, purposeful principle for the research subjects. When they remain aware and connected to this spiritual dimension, it influences their external experience and activity in the world. Research subjects report that if and when they tapped into this inward tacit source, either through religious prayer, regular meditation, inner reflections, scriptural study, group practice or other methods, it increases their level of connectedness, meaning, purpose, and provides a sense of well-being, vitality and aliveness in these individuals. In business management, Maslow came closest to describing it when he used the term “self-actualisation” (Maslow, 1962, 1987). The findings of this research suggest that a spiritual core exists in each individual from which all experience of the world is observed and experienced. This inner core is a dynamic entity which guides all outer expressions and vice versa through external life experiences, the inner subject evolves and transforms as well. At the workplace, this spiritual core which is an all-inclusive phenomenon allows for an effective means to respond to the existential needs of all others, as well as the needs of the natural environment and all existence.

8.3.1.2 Triggers leading to spiritual seeking

There is a deep measure of faith in all key participants of this research towards this X-factor that is tacit beyond sense perception, yet all of them felt emotionally and psychologically connected to this dimension. This faith is often triggered by significant events in the research subjects’ lives or was a gradual faith that grew out of religious or spiritual practices. For the majority of the Eastern subjects the upbringing in some religious tradition or a religious parent played a significant role in influencing their continued interest evolving from mere religious practice to embracing deep spiritual essence embodied in religious teachings, thus rarely outgrowing their attachments to religious heritage and incorporating these practices as a way of life to celebrate as events of cultural significance even if the religious significance is outgrown.

For the majority of the Western subjects however, the association with their religious heritage was either never too deep to begin with or waned with time, leading many to explore other alternatives and even to switch to other religious or spiritual forms. For most of the Western participants, significant life-changing or life-threatening events were quoted as triggers that led to a search for deeper spiritual meanings.

8.3.1.3 Influence of the inner dimension of spirituality to outer engagements

In defining spirituality, this study acknowledged a tacit space within that cannot be viably defined, yet within most major religious traditions both East and West “there is an underlying non-dual orientation and belief that a human being can reach Self-realisation, a state of non-separation with the Ultimate Truth or God” (Kriger and Seng, 2005, p.796). The study revealed that from this tacit source factor, subjects drew their strength of character and return to when moments of doubt or suffering is experienced. For some, it provides surface level solace, while for many others it is a principle that guides them through difficult decisions and responsibilities faced in the external physical world. Thus, the internal spiritual dimension is not only interconnected with the external dimensions of the physical world but suggests that the spiritual dimension is a primary source for external physical dimensions to emerge and co-exist via a tacit-explicit interface. For each, this guiding internal sacred principle is uniquely different, non-definable and therefore cannot be described with any single point of attribute. This difference is deemed to be perfectly acceptable as established in discussions on defining spirituality in Chapter 2. It is also plausible to consider that the limitless spiritual dimension provides for an unlimited freedom of expression unlike prescriptive indoctrinations typically seen in religious structures.

8.3.2 Phase II: RQ2 – Influence of spiritually-inspired leaders on workplace values

In Phase II the influence of the inner tacit spiritual values of the key participants were observed through their extrinsic expressions and engagements with others.

8.3.2.1 Positive relations at the workplace

This higher tacit dimension potentially urges business leaders to act with higher life enhancing spiritual values when dealing in their extrinsic interactions. In this research, the key subjects were found to foster a positive relationship with superiors, subordinates and stakeholders as well as with family members and members of the larger community. Thus, for the better part, these individuals leave positive legacies in their interactions at the workplace. Acting from spiritually inspired conscious state of awareness results in the inevitable outcome of magnetically impacting their immediate surroundings with positive energy that charges others to become inspired and engaged.

8.3.2.2 The link between spirituality and ethical conduct

A significant contribution of this research emphasised that spirituality is not a moral code to determine what is good or bad, right or wrong. Yet the moral ethical overtones remain strongly linked to the concept of spirituality because as the degree of spiritual conviction grows in a human being, so too does his moral and ethical conduct in the world. The simple explanation to this is that when an individual becomes more spiritual, he or she begins to experience their natural state of connectedness to all creation and thus there is an inevitable progression towards becoming more inclusive and less exclusive in their interactions in the world. Hence, the individual is less likely to conceive harm or prejudice against another, as the other is seen as non-other than his or her own self through the awareness of the inter-connectedness of all creation. This connection to an inner creative source encourage individuals to naturally develop an affinity

and affection for all creation acting out of selfless concern for all with a measure of humility rather than from selfish ego-centred motives which are often divisive.

8.3.2.3 The link between spirituality and resilience in facing leadership challenges

Many research participants recounted on challenging times in their professional lives when they had to encounter personal sacrifices or losses in their business careers. The important point to be noted in this respect is that despite professional challenges and personal tragedies, these leaders showed a resilient optimism and fortitude to face any negative turn of events and remain calm and reacted with equanimity. There was generally acceptance of the good with the bad with a confidence that there is lesson and meaning in even adverse undesirable events. So although they genuinely experience hardships, their reactions are less damaging to themselves and to others. This suggests that spiritually-inspired leaders have the right values, to deal even with the shadow sides of business such as corrupt or unethical environments without compromising their personal integrity or causing harm unto others and the natural environment. These were illustrated in the discussions in Chapter 7.

8.3.3 Phase II: RQ3 – Spiritual dimensions at the workplace

8.3.3.1 Expression of spiritual/religious values at the workplace

Spiritual and/or religious values are driven through the organisation either through symbolisms and subtle means, hidden in language, ideals, principles, moral ethical standards and at other times through explicit organisational policies or procedures which clearly reflect a link to an underlying spiritual value of the respective leader.

8.3.3.2 Expression of spiritual/religious values at the Eastern workplace

The clearest example of a link made between a leader's spiritual belief and workplace policy was that of an Eastern participant who instituted a workplace policy to only reimburse

meal claims of travelling employees limited to vegetarian meals. This was clearly based on his own religious practice of vegetarianism. According to him, this policy was well accepted with no major protest from his non-vegetarian employees or clients. Overall, the findings indicate that the Eastern participants practiced their spiritual or religious beliefs more openly and it was an acceptable occurrence which in some workplaces was cheerfully celebrated and encouraged.

8.3.3.3 Expression of spiritual/religious values at the Western workplace

In contrast, the Western participants, despite a personal spiritual inclination, spiritual beliefs were not openly discussed or practiced in the office environment. It was generally seen to be politically incorrect to overtly practice one's own spiritual or religious beliefs in the workplace but neither was there any explicit prohibition against such practices. Instead, it was rather a hushed cultural norm which represented appropriate values in use within the Western norms in workplace environments. With the exception of Easter and Christmas, any personal spiritual or religious obligations were generally observed in private in the individual's personal time and are shared only with personal circles rather than celebrated with the larger organisational milieu. With increasing multiculturalism in Australian workplaces, some initiatives were observed where like-minded groups did convene during lunch breaks or after-office hours to engage in shared religious or spiritual dialogs, for instance a group of members who shared a Christian fellowship used the office space to develop a comradeship and discuss Christian-based values, and this was done freely without formal endorsement by the firm nor with any fear of reprisals either.

8.3.4 Phase II: RQ4 – Impact of spiritually-Inspired leaders on the workplace

Business leaders both in the Eastern and Western sample of this research openly claimed to be spiritually inspired. Findings indicate that these leaders' workplace values were consistent with their personal values which in turn they insist, are influenced by their deeply held spiritual

beliefs. Thus, it proves that in practice for a spiritually inspired individual, workplace values are not separate from his or her spiritual beliefs. This strengthens the increasing view emerging in business literature that the tacit subject of spirituality has its relevance even within business practice that had been long upheld as a secular enterprise.

8.3.4.1 Impact on co-workers – trust

The research findings show that the main impact spiritually-inspired leaders have upon their colleagues at work is that they are trusted, and in turn, they create a climate of trust. This lends to creating a culture of willingness to exert effort at organisational goals as various stakeholders associated with the leader are inspired to act with motivation in supporting the leader's causes. This motivation occurs even in the absence of the leader as followers are inspired and show dedication towards the leader they feel connected to. The leader too expresses genuine care and concern for his troops and stands in their defence even when failures are involved, rarely blaming and even taking responsibility for failed intended outcomes. This trust is built over a period of time and the spiritually inspired leader is often perceived to be decent and trustworthy, hence their decisions and contributions at work are perceived to be fair and wise. While the leader's spiritual inclinations are not readily perceptible to most colleagues, many reported that they "knew" the leader had a spiritual foundation which underlies his actions and motivations in the workplace. This proves that spirituality is an existential concept that despite a lack of overt expression of the leader's spiritual belief, others in the organisation had a knowing sense of the leader's spiritual intent.

8.3.4.2 Impact on co-workers – inspiration

Many co-workers looked to the leader for inspiration and in both the Malaysian and Australian case-studies, the leader was likened to a "wise elder" whose opinions and decisions

are highly regarded. In some cited examples in Chapter Six, it was evident that the leader preserved his dignity and the dignity of those he leads when he takes ownership of difficult circumstances. One example cited in the Australian case-study was the leader's dignified honesty in taking responsibility for a failed project which instead of disdain earned him the respect of his colleagues. This leader also defended and spoke on behalf of colleagues who were not able to defend themselves in some work-related forums. News of such selfless and courageous acts travels quickly through the grapevines and the impact upon the workforce was that of inspiration and genuine respect towards such a leader.

8.3.4.3 Impact on co-workers – loyalty

Earning the loyalty and commitment of co-workers lead to a sense of enjoyment and feeling of satisfaction at work for the leader, and for the followers, there was a good sense of meaning and purpose for the tasks performed at work. The various stories shared by the participants in the Phase II case-studies indicate that the leader is well-supported by trust-worthy comrades who, to a large extent acknowledge that their leader's spiritual beliefs reinforces and strengthens his/her leadership capabilities. They appeared to be loved and appreciated by their fellow work-mates and were also well-respected and trusted for their decisions. Such leaders are also seen to be open to receiving good ideas from others and hence there is voluntary involvement and sharing of knowledge and information with the leader. While it is noted, in a few cases, co-workers claimed ignorance of the spiritual orientation of their leader, as it was not openly discussed or shared at the workplace, yet the findings overwhelmingly indicate that the majority of co-workers had a good sense and appreciation of the spiritually inspired work-related values held by the leader. This finding testifies to the tacit-transmission of core values held by the leader through their extrinsic workplace engagements.

8.3.4.4 Impact on organisational climate and community

The subtle impact of spiritually-inspired leadership is a certain organisational climate which is based on trust and mutual respect resulting in inspired work, both for the leader and his co-workers. This allowed for the genuine spirit of esprit de corps to prevail, resulting in heightened team-spirit and good cooperation with one another at work that aids in the attainment of organisational goals, ultimately seen as serving the success of the organisation. These leaders' influence also extends beyond the work organisation, often engaging in social activism or charitable causes and championing community initiatives, bringing positive change through their influence and integrity within their professional as well as their personal lives.

8.3.4.5 Impact on organisational success

This research does not claim that organisational success is positively linked to spirituality. Instead, it ventures to suggest that when individuals, particularly leaders in positions of power, are spiritually inclined they often succeed in creating an organisational climate that is based on trust and integrity, thus earning the respect and loyalty of their followers. This indirectly generates a culture of willingness and trust among organisational members to exert more genuine contributions towards sustained organisational performance and success. Many participants believed spirituality in the workplace contributed to the organisation's bottom-line, directly or indirectly, although this study did not gather empirical data to prove this point thus cannot conclusively make this assumption. However, this study augmented the findings of business leaders with independent consultants who owned business consulting firms. They provided evidence that some business consultants are already incorporating spirituality inspired values in their consulting packages, testifying that such values are critical for organisational success, giving further credibility to this viewpoint.

8.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE IN THE FIELD OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

8.4.1 Eastern and Western perspectives workplace spirituality

Due to the cross-cultural Eastern and Western perspective taken in this study, the findings of this research also make several other key contributions. In a rapidly globalizing world, East and West are becoming blurred with fading boundaries and confusing demarcations. For example, in this research conducted in Malaysia and Australia to represent East and West, one may argue that multi-cultural Australia may not properly represent a Western viewpoint, also due to its geographical location closer to Eastern rather than Western continent even though due to its historical, political and cultural heritage Australia predominantly adopts and maintains a very Western mind-set. Vice-versa, with the prevalence of Western educated individuals in the East and the spread of Western ideas through its colonized heritage and other Western influence, Malaysian participants may not truly represent an Eastern perspective. A good elucidation on these problematic borderlines is presented by Pruzan (2004) when he discusses in depth the confusion in using the two terms. For the purpose of this research and to maintain an East-West dichotomy, care was taken to employ only participants with an Anglo-Saxon background to represent the Western view from Australia and in the Malaysian cohort, participants were of Asian descent.

This research draws lessons on the similarities and differences that exist between the Eastern and Western flavours on workplace spirituality. Secondly, it demystifies the concept of spirituality and establishes its difference and correlation to religion. More importantly, it reconciles and explains why religious expression is not commonly welcomed in the Western work environments, but is prevalent and mostly acceptable in Eastern cultural domains. Sub-sections 8.4.1.1 to 8.4.1.3 expands on these broad overall key issues having benefitted from the cross-cultural perspectives taken in this research. Overall, the differences between Eastern and

Western views on spirituality were found to be superficial mainly in the use of language and cultural nuances. It provides further assurance that spirituality is a universal phenomenon that applies to all people of all cultures.

8.4.1.1 Legitimacy of religious overtones in Eastern workplaces

The results indicated that in the Eastern context, religious practice and expression are commonly weaved into workplace environments reflecting the larger socio-cultural fabric of most Eastern traditions where the two concepts inextricably co-exist. Thus, a key contribution from this research, in addressing these overarching issues, validates the position of religious expression as useful and relevant within unique geo-cultural segments, insofar as to serve the psychological and socio-cultural needs of individuals and groups in those societies to help express their tacit spiritual belief through some extrinsic religious form or structure.. This finding challenges many a Western view-point where there is a tendency to separate the concept of spirituality and religion, promoting the former and dismissing or devaluing the latter concept (Fairholm, 1998; Mitroff & Denton, 1999a; 1999b; Cavanagh, 1999).

In contrast, this research found that the hostile view on religion was not prevalent in the Eastern subjects. Thus, a key difference between the Eastern and Western results was that there was no outright rejection or subjugation of religious traditions to spiritual supremacy in the Eastern context. Both concepts coexisted side by side. Surprisingly, all participants in this research from the East were found to be eloquent on the distinction between spirituality and religion, yet displayed a keen regard for religious belief, practice and values, demonstrating a unified fondness instead of accruing conflict to the two related concepts.

8.4.1.2 Rejection of religious overtones in Western workplaces

The findings of this research confirm that the Western participants were quite wary of the religious connotations particularly in the workplace context, but surprisingly in their private lives these individuals rigorously pursued a spiritual or religious practice. However, most did not feel comfortable to openly discuss such matters in the work environment, finding the language of spirituality to be less offensive and more acceptable than religious inferences. Why this is so, is explained in the following section.

8.4.1.3 Reasons for preference of spirituality versus religiosity

This research found that for many Eastern subjects, the religious structures served a fundamental need as a platform from which to relate and appreciate the formless divine principle. Even after outgrowing this need, religious practices remain sway and relevant as a symbolic and cultural heritage cherished for its value in passing on traditions to the next generation. This was overwhelmingly evident in the Malaysian context. On the other hand, the scientific movement that swept the Western evolutionist led to a secular movement that spread worldwide through the influence of Western education systems, even in many Eastern worlds, leading to an erosion of traditional cultural or religious-based values. Yet as this research shows, that erosion, cited by many research participants appeared significantly more pronounced in the Western cohorts. Thus the results do indicate that by comparison, the Western subjects are more inclined to remain sceptical about religious doctrines as compared to the Eastern subjects. As one research subject plainly pointed out, the separation that occurred between the Church and the State in the Western world did not occur in the East and this to some extent explains the continued strong presence of religious belief and practice amongst the Eastern sample in this research.

The preference of spirituality over religiosity in some cultures is often quite justified. The distinction between these two concepts was given a thorough explanation in Chapter 2. There is

ample evidence of misrepresentations and misinterpretations of religious teachings both past and present. The tendency to assume and mistake the form (religion) for the formless (spiritual), gives rise to religious doctrine and fanatics. When over-zealous groups of followers insist their conceived form of the formless is the only valid or ‘real’ sacred form, it causes a variety of spiritual and religious havoc.

Many of the world’s institutionalised religions have travelled down this ill-trodden path, leaving spiritual seekers confused and tormented. Instead of promoting freedom of boundless human (or divine) expression, they have curtailed and limited the spiritual into contained sets of moral codes cloaked within fanciful traditional religio-cultural rites and rituals that few in the modern era relate to. While this provides for religious entertainment, it does not come close to the essence of what it means to be spiritual. In the modern era, herein lies most of the challenges and reasonable aversion linked to religious doctrines that often turn corrupt and twisted.

8.4.2 Theoretical contributions

8.4.2.1 The socio-spiritual paradigm

A key theoretical contribution of this study includes the existential view of the inner world of business leaders, providing a snapshot of what the profile of a spiritually-inspired leader looks like. This profile is a highly unique and comprehensive perspective built from multiple lenses with data verified from numerous sources pertaining to the three key participants. It provides an exceptional external fish bowl view combined with these individuals’ own inner viewpoints to form a full thorough profile of spiritually-inspired leaders shot from manifold angles. Building on both chaos and systems perspectives (discussed in Chapter 2), a useful contribution of this research includes the socio-spiritual paradigm (discussed in Chapter 7) which depicts how a

spiritually-inspired leader positively influences his co-workers and associates, by being a source of their inspiration, encouraging motivation, meaning and purpose for colleagues at work.

8.4.2.2 Methodological contributions

An important contribution of this research is the use of the Heuristics methodology, which was a fine balance of systematic steps that unlike most structured research designs, uniquely allowed for a fairly free-flowing ease of discovery which was critical for this exploratory study. At a macro level, the Heuristics methodology with its historical roots in philosophy and natural sciences, more recently widely used within the psychological and sociological disciplines, has been put to good extensive use in this inter-disciplinary study. This methodology allowed for the systematic exploration and discovery of the most fundamental human dimensions of people within the business management field.

It is hoped that this research offers to balance the positivistic penchant of many business management research, much of which show neglect to the point of obliterating the truthful representation of business as fundamentally a human institution. Instead, more often than not, business management research is mostly presented in the typical mechanistic, rational functional slant of financial institution focussed on cash-flows, bottom-lines and profit maximisation. Freeman and Newkirk (2008) offer a compelling argument to re-position business as a human enterprise and therefore this research is in line with this call.

8.4.2.3 Practical Contributions

a) Cross-cultural research

Another contribution of this research is its cross-cultural (Eastern and Western) perspective. The research was aimed to present the study of spirituality from both an Eastern and Western

perspective, which for business domains in the era of rapid globalisation, pose a critical challenge in understanding multicultural sensibilities as well as cross-cultural sensitivities

b) Interdisciplinary research

The research also can be categorised as interdisciplinary, bridging business management and philosophical domains with an aim to demystify and simplify the non-representational concept of spirituality bringing it down to its most rudimentary denomination of practical value, without compromising or diminishing its profound sacred and philosophical significance.

c) Longitudinal study of tacit dimensions

At a practical micro level, the unique Heuristics method and the longitudinal time-frame allowed the researcher to engage very closely with respondents and develop a rapport for understanding of the tacit phenomenon of study. The researcher in this case also had the added advantage of understanding the language and culture of participants from both the Eastern and Western cohorts having been raised in the East and now living in the West, thus overcoming the language and cultural barriers that might have limited others from delving deep and gaining valuable data due to such limiting barriers. For instance, the local cultural manifestations of the Malaysian participants was tacitly understood by the researcher whose own Malaysian background put the Eastern participants at ease to share information with the researcher due to multi-language fluency of the researcher which led to an innate trust that is typically shared among people of a mutual culture. Therefore, the possible bias of added layers of meaning that could have arisen from an alien researcher was removed from this study. With the Western cohort, due to the researcher's extensive overseas travel and extended periods of residence over ten years in Western cultures, allowed the researcher to be equally at ease with her Western participants. This was critical to the study of this nature as having informants develop sufficient trust and ease to share information otherwise not accessible is a common problem in cross-

cultural field work, particularly if the researcher did not have access to the cultural ways of the subjects. For example in a few of the Eastern participant's offices and residences where some interviews were conducted, it was customary to remove shoes as a mark of respect to the host. These sorts of minor local traditional nuances even if innocently overlooked, can become a barrier of mistrust that can adversely affect the hard-earned rapport and trust with informants.

d) A reflexive field-work approach

Understandably, for all participants, it was important to validate their own spiritual beliefs within symbolic traditions of their own cultural heritage, subject to their personal exclusive interpretations. As the researcher herself was an involved participant, pursuing her own spiritual journey in tandem with the long-drawn-out process of this longitudinal study allowed the researcher to use to her advantage her own reflexive journey and provide comfort and total freedom of expression to participants, barring any limiting judgement. Thus, the world of experience of each individual participant in this research was studied from the point of view of the historically and culturally situated personality under observation. The Heuristics methodology aided the research process to be conducted without predetermined prejudice or bias, as the researcher herself was experienced in the fluid and organic nature of a spiritual pursuit, which allowed for a comforting reflexive process in data gathering, particularly free from the arrogance of any given academic bias.

8.5 LIMITATIONS

A clear limitation of this research project was that it included only participants who self-perceived to be spiritually aware without including any business leaders who did not consider themselves spiritually aware. Thus any relevant comparisons between the two categories cannot be drawn. As a qualitative study, it is also acknowledged that the research does not have a sufficient sample size to draw any generalised conclusion, although it is an early exploration

towards an in-depth understanding of the inner tacit world of spiritually-inspired leadership. This study was also limited to two countries with data collected from Australia and Malaysia to draw some narrow cross-cultural comparisons. This can be broadened in future research as there is a dire need of further cross-cultural studies to balance the disparity in the current workplace spirituality literature which are predominantly Western in perspective.

8.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

This research opens doors for other researchers to explore the subject of spirituality in business leadership in related areas. The following recommendations are proposed to mitigate some of the limitations of this study and to offer some suggestions for future research;

- The correlation of spiritually-inspired leadership with organisational success, such as within Fortune 500 firms.
- Similar to this study, but using a much larger cross-cultural (Eastern/Western) sample, study leaders who are seen to be successful within business domains to discover if they have a spiritual anchor or practice.
- Study of business consultancy firms that incorporate spirituality inspired content in their consultancy packages.
- Study the similarities and difference between religiously-inspired leaders versus spiritually-inspired business leaders to consider their influence at the workplace.

8.7 FINAL REFLECTION

As a researcher with a social science background, working within the rationality-driven, validity-demanding, methodical field of business management, this study is offered as a scholarship of common-sense to uncover and present the deeper terrains of what makes this precious life time of humans meaningful and worthy at work. This thesis is concluded with the

following final reflections of the author, inspired by non-other than Adam Smith, the Father of Modern Economics who before his fame as the author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), wrote his lesser known work called the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), both written in the 18th century. As the world celebrated his great work that shaped modern economics, perhaps Adam Smith had intended to influence the world with his two-books to be read as Part I and Part II, as he laid the fundamentals of moral behaviour in his sadly neglected first book to supersede his second book that unfortunately became more influential, proving his concern that the self-interest of man will drive him astray from his moral obligations to society. Perhaps Business Schools should adopt both the books to return business education to the fundamentals of moral philosophy in an era where eroding values are threatening the well-being and survival of mankind due to unscrupulous business practices.

This study which zoned into the inner world of a business leader's tacit dimension, offers an optimistic and hopeful view of the future of business in the hands of spiritually-inspired leaders. Thus although the findings of this research revealed some injustices of the darker shades of business environments, oppressive to individuals and larger communities, the research itself was directed towards highlighting the higher values of spiritually inspired individuals who aspire within their limited means, to maintain morally sacred goals. Such business leaders are a source of inspiration and motivation for their co-workers at the workplace and they represent a symbol of hope for the future world of business based on a more optimistic socio-spiritual paradigm as the one presented in this doctoral study.

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APPENDIX A: PHASE I – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Phase I – Exploratory In-depth Interviews

Interview Schedule

The following questions ask about your spiritual, religious or personal beliefs and how these beliefs affected your quality of life at the workplace. These questions are designed to be applicable to people coming from many different cultures and holding a variety of spiritual, religious or personal beliefs. If you follow a particular religion, such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism etc, you will probably answer the following questions with your religious beliefs in mind. If you do not follow a particular religion but still believe in a higher power, beyond the physical and material world, you may answer the following questions from that perspective. For example, you might believe in a higher spiritual force or the healing power of Nature. Alternatively, you might have no belief in a higher spiritual entity, but you may have strong personal beliefs or following, such as beliefs in scientific theory, a personal way of life, a particular philosophy or a moral and ethical code. While most of these questions will use the words spirituality, please answer them in terms of your own personal belief systems whether it be religious, spiritual or personal.

The following set of questions relate more specifically to your personal values

3. Have you ever asked yourself this question – ‘Who am I’?.(If respondent answers ‘Yes’, ask to elaborate. If respondent answers ‘No’ ask how he/she will respond to this question?)
4. How would you describe your quality of life?
5. Do you feel a sense of being loved and accepted by your family and community?
6. To what extent do you feel balanced in mind, body and soul?

7. What are the values that are most important to you personally?
8. Were these values derived from life experiences, cultural, societal or family influences?
9. To what extent do you feel you are here for a reason?
10. What is your personal purpose in pursuing your present career?
11. How do you engage in the larger community, outside of work and family?
12. Do you have a sense of well-being and trust in humanity?
13. To what extent do you have feelings of inspiration/excitement in your life?

The following set of questions relate more specifically to your views on workplace values

1. What are the values you think are most important in the workplace?
2. Does your workplace reflect these values?
3. How did the events in your personal life affect your work-life?
4. Do your superiors set the tone of your organisation's workplace value systems?
5. Does your workplace treat employees as whole human beings?
6. Do you consider your workplace as having ethical practices?
7. Do you consider your workplace as being socially responsible?
8. Do you experience joy and contentment at work?

The following set of questions relates to your Spiritual Awareness

1. How would you define spirituality?
2. Do you believe in God? Describe your understanding of this concept?
3. Do you think spirituality and religiosity is one and the same thing or not?
4. What's your understanding of the difference between these two concepts?
5. Would you consider yourself spiritual or religious?
6. To what extent do you feel inner spiritual strength?
7. When did your spiritual awareness/journey begin?

8. What was going on in your life when you started to become curious about spirituality?
9. How do you practice or express your spirituality in your personal life?
10. Can you describe events or life-experiences that has resulted in a deepening of your faith in your spiritual journey?
11. Do you turn to any spiritual guidance or belief to help you get past through tough times? If yes... can you give an example?
12. Does your spiritual belief or practice help you to understand others?
13. Does your spiritual belief or practice or faith provide you with comfort and reassurance?
14. To what extent do you feel spiritually touched by beauty? (e.g. of nature, culture, arts, people etc.)?

The following set of questions relate to your views on Workplace Spirituality

1. Are you able to integrate your personal spiritual beliefs with workplace values or do you experience conflict with these two aspects of your life?
2. Can you talk about your own behavioural changes at work because of your spiritual awareness or beliefs?
3. How does your spiritual awareness affect the way you do your work?
4. Does your spiritual belief or practice help you deal with stress?
5. Does your work contribute towards your spiritual awareness and growth?
6. How does your spiritual awareness affect the workplace relationships with your co-workers?
7. Are there any specific activity conducted in the workplace that can be clearly linked to spiritual beliefs?
8. Do you feel safe to express your spiritual beliefs at work?
9. Can you describe any existing workplace values which are clearly based on or linked to spiritual values/beliefs?

10. How do these workplace values affect workplace attitude, behaviour, activity and relationships?
11. Do you believe there might be a link between workplace spirituality and productivity? If yes, please explain.
12. Has there ever been any form of religious/spiritual ceremonies, rituals or rites that has been performed in your workplace? If yes, please describe.
13. Do you believe it is appropriate for employees to practice their spiritual beliefs at work?
14. Do you believe that there may be some expressions of spirituality that may be inappropriate at the workplace?
15. Does spirituality in the workplace lead to more just and humane treatment of employees?
16. Does your spiritual belief help you in decision-making at the workplace?
17. Does spirituality in the workplace contribute to the improvement in the organisation's bottom line (profits)?

APPENDIX B: PHASE I - NARRATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CONSULTANTS

Exploratory Narrative

Interview Schedule for Consultants

1. Can you briefly explain about your interest in the subject area of spirituality. What's your story?
2. Do you think spiritual dimensions are relevant to your work as a Consultant?
3. Do you think spiritual dimensions are relevant to the future world of business and work?
4. In your opinion as a professional Consultant, do you think spiritual values might become increasingly important to the future world of business and work?
5. Can you relate events or occasions in your work as a Consultant when you may have seen or experienced a clear relevance of spirituality?
6. In your opinion do you think consulting firms might advance spiritual based values within their Consulting packages to clients in the corporate world?

APPENDIX C: PHASE II – EXPLANATORY SYNOPSIS TO RESPONDENTS IN CASE

STUDIES

Synopsis – Phase II

Not too long ago spirituality and religion did not have a place in the world of work. Times are a changing. The changing times compel people to do things differently for greater and better outcomes. The world of work with its heightened demands for performance and productivity often leave both employees and employers stressed and stretched to their limits. It necessitates a much deeper paradigm shift, one that involves changing not just the external dimensions of work but perhaps more importantly the inner dimensions of people at work. Workplace spirituality is a research area which looks into a new socio-spiritual paradigm involving a reconnection to the fundamentals – i.e. moral, ethical, righteous principles as well as the recognition of the deeper meaning of work to most people. This research seeks to study existing awareness, effort or activity towards recognizing the spiritual dimension with a direct or indirect purpose to enrich, expand, enlarge and elevate the inner personality for the benefit of the outer world of work and human endeavour.

In Phase II of this PhD research, I am seeking to speak to associates of a key participant (a senior level manager/leader), who has already participated in Phase 1 of this research. This key participant has already been established to espouse a certain spiritual/religious inclination in Phase I of this study. Now in Phase II, the researcher is seeking to speak to potential participants who must either be a subordinate, superior, peer/colleague or any stakeholder who works closely with this particular business manager/leader and who are able to shed more light on how the spiritual values of the key participant is perceived to impact their workplace relationships and environment.

While there has been significant research in this subject area in the West, particularly in the USA and Canada, there has been little work done in terms of cross-cultural perspectives and as such this research is unique in that it aims at addressing this gap with a comparative analysis from a Western(Australian) and Eastern (Malaysian) point of view. The participants in Australia need to be of an Anglo-Saxon origin to fairly represent the Western viewpoint.

The theoretical contribution of this research is to develop an effective conceptual model for transformation of work environments based on a socio-spiritual paradigm. The research also aims to determine whether some of the essential spiritual attributes of leaders and managers potentially affect the underlying organisational value systems based on their spiritual beliefs and practices. Please feel free to contact me for further information if required.

Thank You.

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APPENDIX D: EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS (PHASE I AND II)

Explanatory Statement: Phase 1 – Qualitative

Project Title: Spirituality in the Workplace

A Comparative Study of Australian and Malaysian Organisations

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Karthyeni Purushothaman, lecturer in the Department of Management, School of Business at Monash University Malaysia. Presently, I am conducting a research project towards a PhD at Monash University, Caulfield Campus, Australia. The research project is supervised by Prof. Amrik Sohal and Dr Andrea Howell of the Department of Management, in the Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash Australia and Prof. Ron Edwards of School of Business, Monash University Malaysia. We are writing to you to request your participation in Phase 1 of this study. We have sought your input because of the perspective your experience will bring to this research on workplace spirituality.

The aim of this study is to establish if there is an awareness and use of tacit spiritual values that promotes greater meaning, purpose, motivation and worker satisfaction at the workplace, influencing the order of workplace value systems that guides organizational behaviour and activity. The study aims to develop a conceptual model that could be used by managers and leaders to enhance this spiritual awareness to be tapped for greater meaning and fulfillment in the workplace and to propose an effective model for transformation of work environments based on a socio-spiritual paradigm. I am conducting this research to find out:

1. What are some of the workplace values systems observed among organisational members?
2. What are some of the spiritual dimensions observed/practiced in the workplace?
3. Have spiritual dimensions enhanced workplace behaviour and activity?

Phase 1 of this study, involves the audio taping of semi-structured interviews with senior and middle level management members. Interviews will typically consist of open-response questions to obtain data of participant meanings on the subject area of this research. The interview with senior/middle management is expected to take up to 60-90 minutes to complete. The interviews will broach into areas of personal belief systems, which may be held confidential by some participants. As the interview is conducted purely on a voluntary basis there should be no discomfort whatsoever to participants who may at any time decline to answer any question, which is considered too personal or intrusive. All information obtained in the interviews will remain confidential and will not be identifiable with you. Pseudonyms for individuals and organizations will appear on the transcripts and a code will be used and known, only by my supervisor and myself. In accordance with Monash University's Ethics Committee Guidelines, my supervisors and I will access the collected data, after which, its securely stored and destroyed after 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants or organisations will not be identifiable in such a report..

Please take note that no payments or rewards (financial or otherwise) are offered for your participation in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary - you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to participate you may withdraw at any stage or avoid answering questions, which you feel are too personal or intrusive. In such an event, any information-collected prior will be destroyed upon your withdrawal. Conventions for

maintaining anonymity will be employed in the writing of the thesis and in any subsequent publications.

Attached is a consent form for your signature. The consent form informs me if you agree; to be interviewed; to be contacted for any subsequent interviews; to the proposed use of your information and opinions; and that you are aware of the research conditions, including the purpose and use I will make of your comments.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact **Karthyeni Purushothaman** on +603-56360600 Ext. 3310 or fax +603-58804358 or email: karthyeni@buseco.monash.edu.my

<p>If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:</p>	<p>If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research 2006/087LIR is being conducted, please contact:</p>
<p>Prof Amrik Sohal Associate Dean (Research), Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University PO Box 197, Caulfield East, VIC 3145, Australia. Tel: +613-9903 2033.Fax:+613-99032979 Amrik.Sohal@BusEco.monash.edu.au</p>	<p>Human Ethics Officer Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Building 3d Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 . Fax: +61 3 9905 1420 Email: scerh@adm.monash.edu.au</p>

Thank you for your participation in this important study.

Karthyeni Purushothaman

Explanatory Statement: Phase II – Case Study

Project Title: Spirituality in the Workplace

A Comparative Study of Australian and Malaysian Organisations

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Karthyeni Purushothaman, lecturer in the Department of Management, School of Business and Economics, Caulfield Campus at Monash University. Presently, I am conducting a research project towards a PhD at Monash University. The research project is supervised by Prof. Amrik Sohal of the Caulfield Campus, Dr Andrea Howell of the Berwick Campus, from the Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University Australia and Prof. Ron Edwards, Head of School of Business, Monash University Sunway Campus, Malaysia. We are writing to you to request your participation in Phase 2 of this study. We have sought your input because of the perspective your experience will bring to this research on workplace spirituality.

The aim of this study is to establish if there is an awareness and use of tacit spiritual values that promotes greater meaning, purpose, motivation and worker satisfaction at the workplace, influencing the order of workplace value systems that guides organizational behaviour and activity. The study aims to develop a conceptual model that could be used by managers and leaders to enhance this spiritual awareness to be tapped for greater meaning and fulfilment in the workplace and to propose an effective model for transformation of work environments based on a socio-spiritual paradigm. I am conducting this research to find out;

1. What are some of the workplace values systems observed among organisational members?
2. What are some of the spiritual dimensions observed/practiced in the workplace?
3. Have spiritual dimensions of the leader in this organization influenced workplace behaviour and activity?

Phase I of this study involved interviews with senior and middle level management participants to obtain data of participant meanings on the subject area of this research. Phase II of this study involves in-depth Case-studies using narrative inquiry with subordinates, colleagues or any stakeholder who works closely with the key participant (of Phase I) in order to shed more light on how the spiritual values of the key participant is perceived to impact workplace relationships and work environment. During the research process it became clear that there would be great value to augment the sample profile to include the views of management consultants in order to consider the role of the external consultant in helping business organizations consider spirituality in the workplace; more specifically if their own spiritual beliefs/attitudes/practices are infused within their consulting work.

Interviews will typically consist of open-response questions to obtain data of participant meanings on the subject area of this research. The narrative interview is expected to take up to 45-60 minutes to complete. As the interview is conducted purely on a voluntary basis there should be no discomfort whatsoever to participants who may at any time decline to answer any question, which may be considered too personal or intrusive. All information obtained in the interviews will remain confidential and will not be identifiable with you. Pseudonyms for individuals and organizations will appear on the transcripts and a code will be used and known, only by my supervisor and myself. In accordance with Monash University's Ethics Committee Guidelines, my supervisors and I will access the collected data, after which, its securely stored

and destroyed after 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants or organisations will not be identifiable in such a report..

Please take note that no payments or rewards (financial or otherwise) are offered for your participation in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary - you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to participate you may withdraw at any stage or avoid answering questions, which you feel are too personal or intrusive. In such an event, any information-collected prior will be destroyed upon your withdrawal. Conventions for maintaining anonymity will be employed in the writing of the thesis and in any subsequent publications.

Attached is a consent form for your signature. The consent form informs me if you agree; to be interviewed; to be contacted for any subsequent interviews; to the proposed use of your information and opinions; and that you are aware of the research conditions, including the purpose and use I will make of your comments.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please email **Karthyeni Purushothaman** at Kartyeni.Purushothaman@buseco.monash.edu.au

<p>If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:</p> <p>Prof Amrik Sohal, Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University PO Box 197, Caulfield East, VIC 3145, Australia. Tel: +613-99032033 Fax:+613-99032979 Email: Amrik.Sohal@BusEco.monash.edu.au</p>	<p>If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research 2006/087LIR is being conducted, please contact:</p> <p>Human Ethics Officer Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Building 3D Research Office Monash University VIC 3800, Australia Tel:+613-99052052 Fax:+613-99051420 Email:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au</p>
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Thank you for your participation in this important study.

Karthyeni Purushothaman

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORMS (PHASE I AND II)

Informed Consent Form

Phase I - Qualitative

Project Title: Spirituality in the Workplace

A Comparative Study of Australian and Malaysian Organisations

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher **Yes** **No**

I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped **Yes** **No**

I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required **Yes** **No**

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or

disadvantaged in any way. I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that data from the interview/transcript/audio-tape will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Participant's name:

Signature:

Date:

Informed Consent Form

Phase II – Case Study using Narrative Inquiry

Project Title: Spirituality in the Workplace

A Comparative Study of Australian and Malaysian Organisations

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher **Yes** **No**

I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped **Yes** **No**

I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required **Yes** **No**

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way. I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that data from the interview/transcript/audio-tape will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Participant's name:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX F: BACKGROUND AND HEURISTICS JOURNEY OF THE RESEARCHER

(INCUBATION PHASE)

Background

My background is in the Social Sciences, earning a Bachelor of Arts and Social Science Degree specialising in Anthropology and Sociology, from University Malaya in 1987. My Master of Arts in Human Resource Management from the University of Hull, UK, was obtained in 1995. As partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's Degree, I submitted a Dissertation on Peter Senge's concept of the Learning Organisation as a suitable model for change in a Malaysian R&D Institute where I had been working at that time. It was my first brush with anything remotely spiritual in management literature. In Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* (1990), his descriptions of Systems Thinking, Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building Shared Vision and Team Learning read like a New Age novel, bordering on metaphysics (concerned with problems of existence), ethics (concerned with problems of what is good, right and moral) and spirituality (a field so vague to me at that time I could not articulate what it was), but intuitively knew, it was important and felt in my core that it is to be powerful and transformational.

Returning from my studies, to work as a young executive in the Corporate Services division of the same Institute, I enthusiastically went about introducing the concepts I had learnt to Senior Management. I was fuelled by the obvious outward expression of keen interest among the top brass, to become a so called a "Learning Organisation". It was deemed an appropriate model for change for this public service R&D organisation which was undergoing a corporatisation program. I remember organising a Senior Management Retreat to an isolated resort where key members of the organisation "connected" to one another and the retreat program called "ABC", was hailed a huge success and the atmosphere at work for about a week after the program was

electrifying, with members who were not at the retreat coming up to me and asking “What happened at the retreat?”

The CEO, a usually serious, aloof and distantly respected boss of the Institute was using unusual words like “love” and “compassion” at our monthly assembly and the employees were puzzled by his sudden moving expressions. It was my first personal experience with “organizational soul” and spirit at work. It was a genuinely uplifting moment, an invisible, intangible essence, felt by my co-workers and I, a climate based on trust, sharing, caring, and loving. An unusual moment in time where the usual separation, internal politics, back-stabbing feuds and turf protection were all forgotten, replaced by a climate of camaraderie – albeit temporarily.

The heightened positive energy felt by all members of the organisation, did not last. It was not sustainable. In less than two weeks things returned to “normal”. As I tried in vain to recapture that lost moment I was hit hard by the reality of organisational life. For me, it was like giving a blind person sight and then taking it away again. The glimpse of brightness, of what greatness can feel like, and then seeing it fade back to darkness, and the swift return of the usual fear and control based management systems, led me to depression at work. In my frustration, I shot off an e-mail to the “Guru” himself, locating his address on the Sloan School of Management website. Clearly I was not expecting a reply – simply letting off steam, complaining to the Guru that his “Learning Organisation Model” looks nice on paper but cannot be sustained in reality. Perhaps I countered, hoping to sound logical, that the Western model may not be suitable for an Eastern setting. The very next day, I nearly fell off my chair, when I opened my mailbox to find a message from Peter Senge. I was thrilled to bits. The Guru himself had written to me...to this inconsequential soul on the other side of the globe. My spirit soared. My heart raced, as I was touched by his sincerity to respond to a total stranger, whining about his theory. His reply was,

simple, concise and precise. I remember his words to this day. He said, simply, “Dear Karthyeni, like all important things in life, building a Learning Organisation takes Patience, Persistence and Perseverance”. He went on to wish me luck and gave me a few big names I could contact on his behalf in this region, who could possibly offer help with my work. Senge obviously left a lasting mental model on me. For him, I would be a nothing more than a forgotten moment, vanishing from his mind for good. For me, it was a life-changing moment of significance, that one instant, was to last a lifetime. 10 years thereon, I find myself recalling that poignant flash, paying tribute to a man who wrote with passion what he believes to be true.

So the seed of my own spiritual journey was planted then. I went on with my explorations in life that led me eventually to another poignant mile-stone. It was July 2001. I was sitting in a Hotel Conference Room, in Melbourne Australia, with distinguished colleagues deliberating on re-evaluating and Internationalising the Syllabus of the Business and Economics Faculty. I was one of the 3 representatives from the Malaysian campus on that Academic Project. During one of the sessions, when the group was deep in discussion on ways to be more sensitive towards other cultures and ways to include Eastern Management Models into our Management syllabus, without warning the Head of the Department then, Professor Owen Hughes, turned directly at me and asked this very pertinent question. “So Kathy, tell me, what are these Eastern Models and where can we find them? I naturally was unprepared for such a big question. I wondered silently in my head, “Why is he asking me?” I thought, and realised immediately, I was the only Easterner in the room. I had to respond quickly or be embarrassed in front of all these prominent colleagues. I scrambled for an answer in my head. I responded almost apologetically, not remembering my actual words, explaining that most Eastern wisdom are intricately embedded in spiritual literature which are difficult to unravel as they are steeped in elaborately woven mythological stories, customs and traditions. The team paused for a moment of acute silence,

then suddenly, as if satisfied (or dissatisfied) with my answer, the meeting proceeded to discuss other matters. However, I was left with one haunting question in my mind. “Where are the Eastern philosophies? All I could offer was a meek explanation that they were “somewhere hard to find” I was tormented by the inadequacy of my own defence. What a pathetic excuse by an Easterner in a forum dominated by Westerners, who were genuinely seeking input to include into mainstream management syllabus. It brought a twist to my study plans.

I had soon enrolled into a Masters/Doctoral research program at the Faculty of Business and Economics, at Monash Australia, with a research proposal on the topic of “Learning Organisation and Leadership”. After this question from Owen, I changed my research topic to “Transforming Management: Issues for developing and sustaining a K-Economy in Malaysia”. At that time, I was still too nervous to mention the word “spirituality” in my study for fear of being sneered at by the academia. Within me however, my interest was already steered in that direction, and there was no turning back. I delved deep into any literature on spirituality in management that I could lay my hands on. What happened next was inevitable. I got completely overwhelmed and lost in the spiritual maze. I knew I had to go deal with my own spirituality, let alone, the spirituality of others.

Researcher’s eight-month Ashram Sojourn in India

So in earnest, and in great emotional turmoil, I wrote for a leave of absence for one year, starting Jan 2003. Cleaning out my bank account, leaving behind angry parents, a troubled husband and a confused 11 year old child, I went to live in India, at the Vedanta Academy, set amidst the hills and valley of a remote village called Malavli, 100 kms from the city of Mumbai. It was a stark contrast to the comfy life I had been living in the cosmopolitan city of Kuala Lumpur. At first, it felt like being in a different world. As I adjusted to the routines of ashram life I began to enjoy the peace, tranquillity and opportunity to be amongst other fellow students who have all come

there to find inner joy and explore the depths of Vedic literature. I spent 8 months there, in intense study and deep reflection of the Vedanta, an ancient Vedic Science purported to be a perennial universal philosophy, a heritage of India left for all mankind to benefit from. The ashram had a strict regimented schedule of 4am rising, simple vegetarian meals, daily spiritual lectures, group study, personal reflective time, meditation, chanting of Vedic hymns, daily ashram related chores such as cleaning, cooking, washing, gardening and administrative duties with little contact with the “world outside”, and with little access to any form of communication media. I adjusted well, utilising my time to intensify my spiritual knowledge and practice. The ashram sojourn challenged me, but firmly planted me on my own sincere spiritual inquiry and adventure. I returned home in September 2003, understanding that soul-searching is a journey not a destination and that I must find my “dharma” or purpose in life through the lessons and relationships in life.

Returning to my “normal” life, resuming my studies, revitalised by my stay in India, I returned to Monash with greater confidence to pursue the subject of my heart. It was really heart-warming to find within the revised new edition of the Management Subject I taught at the University, the prescribed text had included a new sub-section called Workplace Spirituality. As I returned to my research and literature review, I knew for certain, that I was on the right track. The clarity I achieved during my time of reflection at the ashram, and the courage to pursue this non-traditional area in management, I felt confident moving forward. Integrating my own personal journey, with my vocation, has been both challenging and a most rewarding experience on multiple levels, personally and professionally. It was however a great relief thereafter to be able to pursue the topic of Spirituality in the field of Business Management with great conviction and passion.

APPENDIX G: FULL EXCERPTS OF NARRATIVES FROM FINDINGS CHAPTERS FOUR, FIVE (PHASE I), SIX (PHASE II) AND SEVEN (DISCUSSION)

Appendix 4.5.1

The following excerpt provides a detailed account of the response from DTHTMI on the ingrained religious structures within family and education systems in Malaysia. The respondent was responding to the first question on the Interview Schedule “Have you asked yourself this question “Who Am I”?

*“Yes. On many occasions, not just once or twice. ...Thankfully, my late parents ingrained Islamic values in me from the time I was 6 years old, such as do not speak ill of others, do not hurt others in what you do or say, and so with such a foundation its easy to take for granted that I’m a Muslim, but how much do we really know about our religion and how it relates to our day to day life? Especially by age 15.16, you notice so called Muslims not practicing the teachings....that’s when I realised no religion teaches any ill, or bad, also clearly stated in the Quran, you have your faith, others have theirs. Then during my Pre-University education ...on top of my regular classes I also attended religious education. At the same time I was exposed to my college mates of various religious denominations, each with his own practice... again I was confronted by this question and so I came to understand that as long as you respect another person, immaterial of his belief or faith, I believe the spirituality in me helped me realise this and be a better person, not to become empty, not to resort to name-calling of the non (Islamic) believers or to be extremist as some people are. That period, my college days, cemented in me what I am today, a tolerant perspective (as intended in the religious teachings) - especially after working in many countries and understanding that spirituality in people is practiced in many forms. So my religious foundation and life experiences makes me strong in my values and faith.- I pray 5 times a day and observe the 5 pillars of Islam and impart it to my family.”
(DTHTMI)*

Appendix 4.5.1

The following excerpt provides a detailed account of the response from ZMS on the ingrained religious structures within family and education systems in Malaysia. The respondent was responding to the first question on the Interview Schedule “Have you asked yourself this question “Who Am I”?

“This question (Who am I?) is asked from the time we are young...usually from our religious background and upbringing. That’s where it started...In the past we are brought up that way, for example, I attended religious class from Standard One to Standard 6. In the evening we have the Quran class and also the religious teachers. So all our life this question is onto us. Also our parents practiced these values...such as proper manners, Malay customs such as how to treat your elders. So such upbringing leads us to what you are today. So it goes back to your upbringing. If it was not done properly, you wouldn’t even ask this question...you go about life just like that..but with a religious or spiritual background you start your own direction and principles in life...

This principle does not come on its own but through religious education, somebody teaches you and you learn what is right. For example, the Quran teaches – drop this, do that, good values and from there you develop to be what you are.” (ZMS)

Appendix 4.6.3.1

The following excerpt provide a detailed account of the response from DVE on the concept of God and it shows his impassioned believe that God was a given factor and his exasperation with Agnostics who generally believe that it is impossible to know whether there is a God. The respondent was responding to the question on the Interview Schedule: “Do you believe in God? Describe your understanding of this concept.”

“How can you not believe in it? I mean I have no problems with atheist, I can live with them. But it’s the agnostics that piss me off, as an agnostic is someone who doesn’t give a hoot, in essence a selfish individual – who says it does not concern me. I mean, an agnostic would qualify as the German in World War II who kept watching his Jewish neighbours being taken one by one to be executed, knowing what was going to happen to them, and couldn’t be bothered, and kept on drinking his beer – that’s bull shit. But an atheist lives up to a higher moral category and I respect that. What they (the atheist) say is that I don’t believe in God. Very foolish statement for an atheist to make isn’t it? He (an atheist) says I don’t believe in God, but by that definition, he’s saying God exist, but I just don’t believe in it. Actually he should be saying “I do not want to believe” Now in not wanting to believe is perfectly acceptable. It is also perfectly acceptable to the Lord...the atheist actually tend to be pretty good people. They have higher moral values, they have high ethical values because even if they don’t have a God, they have a system they believe in – so they have greater belief in Truth, integrity, so in essence, I have no objection to them, I think they are mostly just a little bit afraid because the concept of having to accept a God is a pretty scary thing...It’s like Wow, no way am I ever alone, everything I’ve done is open for review and is constantly being watched upon. So it is quite a daunting thing to accept.” (DVE)

Appendix 4.6.3.

This response was recorded from DVE who was answering the question, “*What is your understanding of the difference between these two concepts (spirituality and religiosity)?*”. This participant was clearly able to distinguish between the concepts of religion and spirituality through his elaborate narration below where he elucidates that many people confuse the two concepts to be one and the same thing. He was also fairly critical about some religious practices which he said were stupid and provided his take on why religion has its negative connotations as seen in the excerpt below.

“The reason why people get put off is because they assume that religion is spirituality. The practices of religion is actually stupid sometimes, primarily because religion itself as you know has become bureaucratic, theoretic and you know most of all, in many cases it has become dogmatic...So it is sad that theology replaces love. In religion, theology replaces love. What then do you have there? You have chaos. Different political systems based on religious platforms. But Ghandiji (a respectful loving term used to address Mahatma Gandhi) puts it best. Ghandiji so succinctly said, “God has no Religion”...if God has no religion why are you chasing religion? The point is to go inwards...that’s the beauty of our (the participant uses the term “our” to include the belief system of the researcher in this instance) belief system. In the Vedic belief system, there are no tenets, no commandments, no rules, and it is the Westerners who in their stupidity call us Hindu. That comes out of a historical and geographical index as opposed to any spiritual connotation. They looked at the Indus River. The people towards the west of the Indus River were basically Persian at that time. And it was the demarcation point between Persia and Punjab. And Punjab has always been our border for many centuries. It was the place where everybody got turned back. Many, many conquerors came and left including Alexander the Great (327-25BC). And it is also the cradle of the civilization of the world – Mohenjodaro and Harrapa, the Vedic civilisation...and so we were referred to as Hindu. Because of the river. And the land became Hindustan. So from there the whole continent was branded. The way we refer to ourselves is “Sanatana Dharma”. It is the path of eternal truth. Dharma is for truth and duty, because to us there is no conflict between the two. Dharma is both the path of eternal truth and the path for eternal duty. Dharma is how we refer to ourselves and it encompasses everything that you call

Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, all of which are not incongruent. They are in sync. They are the same philosophy. Nothing different. It spans the whole of Asia. Sanatana Dharma takes us to the second largest religion in the world, if not the first.” (DVE)

Appendix 4.6.3.1

This excerpt below from JTP was his response to the question on: *What's your understanding of the difference between these two concepts (spirituality and religiosity)?* His answer shows that he is able to clearly depict the difference between the two concepts and is able to reconcile how the concepts co-exist by suggesting that religion are doctrines of laws for right living in the external world, whereas spirituality is an experiential inner life domain.

“Well spirituality is as I mentioned earlier on, is about knowing the love of God and in return love God and love the people around you..Of course you have to love God first, by loving God then you'll be putting into your character your purpose of living. So basically practice that love in a relationship, you live in a relationship in this world, with life human being. That's spirituality. It really challenges religious (practices) actually it's very much just an orthodox if you believe in a certain doctrine, whereby it is the rules and regulations laws of doing good, laws of practicing good things whereby if you don't obey you will not attain salvation. You do good things and may not bring you to heaven, may not give you eternal life. But you must have that spirituality of loving God and loving others and in return you receive spiritual eternity. So it's just a very clear cut thing. Religion, and of course spirituality is two different things to me. For example the Lord said you have to worship 5 times in a day and if you follow that, that's religion - that's being religious. The Lord said that you should fast a certain period of time that is religion, is not spiritual. Spirituality is any time any place it just happen naturally because you love God and you experience the love of God ...I would very much like to be spiritual rather than religious. And of course it's going to be a conscious attempt trying to be spiritual.”
(JTP)

Appendix 5.4

These excerpts illustrate the link between spiritual awareness, personal values and workplace place values. It depicts that workplace values are influenced by the spiritual/religious and personal values of the leaders.

“My staff know I’m religious. There is greater religious awareness then spiritual awareness in my office. We practice recital of prayers before meetings and we encourage our staff to fulfil their prayer obligations during office hours by providing a “surau” (Muslim prayer room) so that they can pray. We are a close-knit family in the office. Over the past 16 years I can see people are more motivated, more committed and also we are multi-religious I can see there is no segregation between them. They go out for meals together and often buy each other meals when they see a colleague is too busy to go out. I also used to conduct daily morning prayers in the office with recital from the Quran for 15 minutes and I used to have foreign white expatriates who would join in without any problems. I can understand why the spirituality movement is big in the US as many of them are very open to this. I believe all this practices fosters a family like relations in the office. In fact I know all of my staff and their families too.” (DTHTMI)

“The most important values at work are communication and integrity. I think they need to practice integrity as much as possible because in the corporate world you can engage in workplace politics between people, between departments...and sometimes feel defeated if you don’t win the game. But if you stand a distance from things, you can remind yourself, this is my principle, this is my spiritual belief and I need to put that into practice into my work life as well. Although I’m a senior manager, I see myself as middle management. I’m not at the top of the organisational hierarchy, but being in a senior position is really important to be humble and obey authorities above. This is what we are taught in our spiritual traditions...We can’t disintegrate work from our spiritual values. I don’t think we have a culture of saying you can’t bring your spiritual values into work. I’m sure the bosses will be truly happy if everybody practiced their spiritual values – usually they are good values and so will be good for the workplace too.” (JTP)

“I think in a workplace, it is like in any family, people must know they should work in harmony, they must be open, and they must have trust and sincerity. All these positive values must be there, they must be able to share and care for one another as you would find in any good family. This kind of values must be promoted in the workplace, and when there’s empathy, people are allowed to express themselves, people will show more concern, more patience, perseverance and people become gentle in their communication and this will give people a true sense of belonging. However this external change will only happen when the change happens internally within you. When these values are internalised, they manifest in the workplace. People waste so much money getting their Feng Shui (ancient Chinese system of aesthetics to promote flow of “chi” or good energy) right. But true “Feng Shui” is simply being true in the heart. Love is the most important and the most powerful tool – all management tools and techniques promoted by the different Management Gurus, they contribute a bit, but they are not penetrative enough to reach the deep-seated sublime centre of our mind where if that flowers, the force within deeply embedded in our mind, in ourselves, in every being - when you allow that to flourish only then real change will occur. In my own workplace there is certainly room for more improvements, but I’m proud to say, compared to many companies I’ve seen in Malaysia, these values are more prominent in my company.”(JFFL)

“Service is the most important value at work. I have a little rule book. When you serve the Lord in you, you will find Him. If you serve Him in others, He will find you. So service is the cardinal rule. The motto in my company is to raise yourself in order to serve mankind. To serve, is a fundamental value, so is humility. But I do not consider love a value, because love is born out of other fundamental values such as when one subscribes to the values of truth, humility and solace, love is born there. God is love. It’s not that we live for Him, we live in Him. So everyone you see around you, this particular interview for instance could not have happened if it was not His will.”(DVE)

“There is a natural tendency for me to trust people that I’m interacting with personally. I see a lot of people at work competing against others and discounting the work that others do, and so you do feel that these people are trying to look after their own interest rather than that of the broader company or its customers or the community. I am reasonably competitive, as in excited and energised. I’m competitive in a sense, that i think there are

two ways you can be competitive - one, is to beat down somebody and the other is to be better than somebody. I'm the second. So I'm sort of like the tree that grows taller rather than one that chops of tree next door to feel taller. So yes it's important to have trust within the team. But in the bank, a lot of people don't trust senior managers. There's a lot of suspicion over decisions by senior managers and sometimes these suspicions are well-founded."(JE [M])

Appendix 5.4.1

These excerpts illustrate workplace values showing the formation of organisational culture through workplace relations.

*“I have greater awareness and compassion for the needs of my staff. They too have the confidence to approach me when they are experiencing problems, work or personal. I have helped some staff with their personal matters by offering them personal loans. My staff also are well aware of my high ethical standards and know that I have personally rejected projects that involved bribery as sometimes I have to deal with government contracts where corruption exist. So I set a good example for my staff and they know I won't compromise my conscience to make a quick buck. This further builds trust in the office environment and staff begin to respect you for your values and I'm aware that I'm a role-model to them. The religious rites that I perform at work, my staff are keen to participate in, for example, they would bring flowers for the altar at work. It fosters a feeling of togetherness and family like relations at work. Indeed, my staff come home to celebrate religious festivals at my house and they are members of my extended family.
(KM)*

Spirituality affects everything. You begin to see everything is interrelated. Personally I am aware of my own weaknesses, such as my tendency for anger. So I take great care to project my sincerity to others. Like all workplaces, with many kinds of people in the office, there's bound to be office politics. But I try to be sincere, loving and caring. All the positive energies, such as respect one another, humility, be compassionate and gentle, transparency in managing – Over time others in the office will notice these qualities and I find it attracts better relationships with one another. People become peaceful around you and have greater confidence and are generally comfortable with you. There is no fear that you'll back-stab them when their backs are turned. When you are spiritual, you work in a way that brings goodness to your company and so naturally things improve with co-workers and in this company we have grown from strength to strength, without the typical, strategic plans where everything is quantitatively measured. We focus on building good relationships. Good relationships.”(JFFL)

Appendix 5.4.3

The following excerpts depict the responses of participants when questioned on the link between spirituality and the bottom-line.

“I don’t know if spirituality contributes towards the profit but it definitely contributes towards our acceptance of profits per say. Being profitable or not profitable becomes sometimes a secondary issue. You chase the profit from the view point of a corporate exercise but at the end of the day we accept whatever comes...We take that in our stride. In between there are challenges where we hit a valley instead of a mountain. You go down and take that in our stride. You know in some companies we have tried and worked we have experienced loss in some of our ventures that we have attempted. And we take them in our stride. For instance, it’s all part of the same learning curve. Spirituality helps you accept things in your stride and move on. Our company has had astronomical growth in the last 8 years. I may not link it to spirituality, but I definitely would not de-link it. I would say it’s an important component. It’s a lot to do with acceptance rather than expectation like all important things in life. When you accept you have better experience of everything, whether its love, marriage, work or profits.” (DVE)

Appendix 5.5.2.1

This narrative below is from an independent business consultant in Australia who expresses a degree of concern for the way spirituality is commoditized by consulting firms and sold as a tool for success and measured for return on investments. This Consultant, who is on an authentic spiritual journey himself, finds this to be a worrying trend.

“...there’s a degree of authenticity for me... Unless we are open to exploring it (spirituality) for ourselves and with our clients...it is not going to return to mainstream until the ways of society and consulting firms change to play a role. You know it’s amazing there are times I’ve seen Consultants who don’t have any meditative practice of their own, conduct meditation sessions in a training program! So how does that work?...you are training other people when you don’t do it yourself, they are exploring spiritual practice with others when they haven’t got a spiritual journey of their own. It’s not about mapping something spiritual and then saying next week I’m going to go and do X. But it’s about actually knowing that you are on one (a spiritual journey) and being ok with that. It’s challenging because, ultimately a corporation which is going to invest money in a consulting firm to take them on a spiritual journey is answerable to a whole range of people. Whether it be the CEO, the board, the shareholders and all those wondering about “what is the return on investment, what is the tangible benefit of exploring spirituality, how do you measure its success?”...and that in part in my mind flies against the whole essence of what spirituality is. That would suggest that spirituality is just one more thing you can tick off. If you do, if we’re all spiritual employees we’ll make more money...so the challenge is, that you’ve got the end-users of spirituality, shareholder etc., wanting to know what the tangible benefits of a spiritual-based development is – there actually might be none. But that doesn’t mean that it’s not a good idea.” (RH)

The following narrative from RH provides contextual information of his background to developing an authentic spiritual journey.

“Until I was about 16...I come from a fairly religious family. Growing up attending Sunday school, fairly involved with the church community in a small country town. I lost an elder brother who was three when he died which may have been why my parents turned to religion to make sense of their loss. As a young fella, I used to see dad read from the bible in the evenings and he spoke of seeing visions. Then I went to an Anglican

Boarding School in Ballarat and I was pall-bearer in church on Sundays....Then between the ages of 17 and 18 I stopped going to Church altogether for a number of reasons. Mainly because it was “not cool”. Also a Minister at Church who was a dear friend died and I didn’t go to Church for a long time since then. In my mid 20’s I had periods of depression. But I switched off from spirituality, except when I was in crisis I would pray to God. I had two way conversations with God and my brother who had died...then I heard my best friend since I was 15 had committed suicide due to depression and many farmers and farmer’s kids from my small town committed suicide. Then just after 9/11 I started to have lots of questions...It brought a catalytic moment.”(RH)

The following excerpt is by AZ a Malaysian Business Consultant’s narrative on Eastern versus Western spirituality and his understandings why it is different.

“We in the East are overly influenced by the secular West, but historically, in the 18th century, the separation of the Church and the state didn’t happen in Asia. For most people in these parts of the world, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism is a way of life. It cannot be separated from anything in life. It is illogical to separate. For example for us Muslims, Science and Religion are one. My maternal grandfather taught me the fundamentals of Islam. He was a very kind, totally responsible man who lived universal values. So as a 5 year old I grew up with my Granddad as a strong role model, learning the Quran, listening to scriptural sounds. In school I was very interested in “Agama” (Islamic religious class). My teachers however couldn’t answer a lot of my questions. Fortunately, I had an elder sister who was able to challenge my mind with rational alternative viewpoints. My family was a Muslim minority in a predominantly Chinese area. I also grew up with images of religious Chinese festivals, and there was a Hindu temple nearby, so I was never afraid of the different images of a variety of Gods in other religions. My friends were kids from other faiths and when I visited their homes, their parents would ensure if I stayed for a meal, they would not serve pork or non halal meats. In university, I noticed marginalisation of other races. For example pork was not served in the university hostel to be sensitive to Malays who can’t eat pork, but they served beef, being quite insensitive to Indians who were Hindu. Since that day I gave up eating beef, as a mark of respect and protest against the unfair practices in this country. In my office there is a ruling, No pork, no beef. We also observe Malaysian customs, such as removing our shoes when we step into our office. We celebrate all Malaysian festivals. It is good to see my Malay staff putting up Christmas and Deepavali or Chinese New Year decorations in the office during various festivals.”(AZ)

Appendix 5.2.2.2

The following excerpts are responses to the question to Business Consultants on whether spiritual dimensions were relevant to their work. As the responses show all Consultants interviewed expressed a profound influence of spirituality in their consulting work, providing examples on how it manifest in the workplace. They were responding to the following Question;

Q2. Do you think that spiritual dimensions are relevant to your work as a business consultant?

“Spirituality operates within and beyond me at a conscious level, in choices I make and how I interpret events in my life. At an unconscious level it’s who I am. So it fuses in my work because I would be inauthentic with myself if I didn’t consider spirituality in all that I do...Whether I explicitly talked to a client about spirituality or not, which most of the time I do, it is amazing how people want to talk about spirituality. Whether it be me trying to understand a person, be it an acceptance that I can’t know all things, to be more present when I’m in a client meeting or a coaching session, being more present in the room, trying to be more connected to myself, trying to be okay with not having all the answers – that’s what I know on an implicit level. On a more explicit level, I talk about my research about spirituality, how people make meaning, and what people can do to explore their spirituality – it relates to emotional intelligence which is really where I’m training and coaching. It’s amazing how spirituality helps people understand and manage their own feelings and to cope with those complex life experiences... In my daily work, you know the training that I do, the coaching that I do, the materials that I pull together for my clients all have a spiritual-based principles in them. I guess my lens through which I view the world is in part infused by my spiritual path. (RH)

In the following excerpt RH relates the impact his meditative practice had on his colleagues at work.

“I initiated meditation sessions before our meetings in the office. There was a curiosity about what is meditation to begin with. How can it help me? So we suggest how meditation improves self-awareness and self-management and dealing with strong emotions and intuition and all that stuff that relates also to our work on emotional intelligence and resilience. My CEO who is also my mate based in Sydney, when he’s down in Melbourne, we used to go for a walk in the morning and I used to meditate before

I leave for work. Initially he'd be impatient to get to work, but I'd insist that I need to sit on a cushion for a while, it was my daily morning routine. So he started to sit with me and then later chat about it on the way to work. When I travel to Sydney he did the same thing for me, to accommodate me. Then when we were in meetings we just started a brief meditation session with other guys in the office and we started talking about it more openly. Whether they understand the philosophical context around meditation does not matter. Most think it's a good idea to deal with stress." (RH)

The other business consultant from the Western cohort was absolutely positive that Business Consultants and Coaches can play a huge role in infusing spirituality in their work with clients;

"Absolutely! We (consultants) are in fact in a position of potential especially when you become very trusted with your clients. Consultants have the ability to shift mind-sets and the way of being at very high levels in corporations. I don't believe governments can change the world, but those with money can and money is with the corporate. Executive coaches do it all the time. I call it the "Trojan horse" where you have to go into the corporation completely dressed-up differently to cloak it, but over time you build intimate relationships with your clients and when they start to feel, the way I do and begin to ask the important questions like 'what is my purpose?; am I leaving the earth better than when I found it?; do I contribute to anyone else other than my own? I know of many Consultants who are already doing it. My friend started John McFarlane of ANZ on his path. Over the years I've had some big hitters too – success, generally with senior level male clients whom mostly I still connect with." (SF)

Here in the next excerpt RH confides how there is a greater openness and readiness among his business clients to the concept of spirituality.

"When I first started, finding anyone interested in spirituality was really difficult. I used to present to industry groups and people generally saw no relevance to spirituality at all. Increasingly, now I think the organisations are a lot more open to it because I think they are looking for answers when all the answers you have no longer work, you have to look elsewhere. There are many clients on big salaries who confide they have no meaning in their lives. One successful client responsible for a multi-million dollar project says "I hate what I do". Another client complained "I don't spend much time at home" I often feel in my coaching career, practically every client I've had, and I had ultimately 10-12 people

that I coach at a time, all were challenging meaning and whether they should stay in the jobs they were in. My work help in their self-discovery, sometimes leaving me conflicted, because I'm hired to get the top brass motivated to perform and many confide they want to leave! Many of them are stressed out. Most clients provide good feedback like "I learned a lot", "you've really helped me understand something". I have one or two who have said I speak esoteric rubbish. But 9 out of 10 appreciate my kind of work which allows them to open up emotionally. I notice there is greater readiness in my clients to explore spirituality or when I talked God they are receptive as in business many are seeking meaning especially with all that uncertainty out there." (RH)

In the following excerpts the Consultants caution against the potential for spirituality to become the next fad in management.

"Although people are coming out to talk more loudly about this topic in the Consulting circles, there's one thing I don't want to happen is for spirituality to be productised. Many think if you are spiritual you must only be good. People need to understand that spirituality is not about being good, it's about acceptance - that human beings have contradictions; they have the light and shadow sides. We need to understand that if we don't deal with the dark side, it will get darker and darker. So instead of using the word spirituality I might prefer to use the word "inner purpose" with my clients. There are already some such training programs.as In Mount Eliza Business School where they are training "Mindful Leaders" in a 4 day program. Spirituality is about connection and continuity and we can't turn someone spiritual in 4 days. So we need to be careful with the language that we use to package the programs, perhaps "coaching" is a better word as it suggest on-going-ness." (SF)

The following are the responses from Business Consultants from the Eastern cohort who register a similar response as their Western counterparts:

"We definitely infuse spiritual values in all my training programs. For e.g. we have a program called "Making a Difference" (MAD) a lot of the concepts presented in this program is borrowed from various religious scriptures, the Quran, the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita etc.. It is a program designed to help clients change from within. We criss-cross all the traditions, citing various quotes from various religious text. Of course we don't shout and scream about our spiritual sources, but we don't mask it either. We find people who attend the programs pick up what they want or recognise and we've had a lot of feedback for e.g. a Buddhist will say, that's from our Buddhist teaching, but then a

Hindu would say that was a Hindu teaching too...as a lot of the values are quite universal. Malaysians are not just tolerant of different religions but they are also very accepting. The problem is only caused by silly politicians who incite divisive tensions. Malaysians don't read about other religions and so we educate them and we often get positive feedback from our clients.” (AZ)

“A business person wakes up early in the morning at 6 o'clock, showers then goes to work for 8-9 hours sometimes 12 hours including travel time to create a customer. When you create a customer you create jobs and we make this world a better place. As long as you are doing a good job, not cheating etc., tell me why are we not going to heaven? I have programs called “Sales people go to Heaven” “Banking people go to Heaven”. They create customers thru sales, thru credit. Peter Drucker says the purpose of business is one and one only – to create a customer either thru innovation, advertising and marketing, sales and credit. Any one of these four methods creates a customer, which creates jobs and adds value to society. The problem is, most people cannot link what they do on a day to day basis with spirituality. We need to help them understand that when you go to work and do a good job, and contribute towards society thru value creation, then that's spirituality. This is what I explain to my clients thru my various training programs. Spirituality as what most religious teachings present is simply a way of life. Work can't be separate from your way of life. The Management gurus like Peter Senge, Stephen Covey and Drucker, their writings too were spiritual.” (AZ)

“Especially a business person who has experienced a business crisis, they start to connect to the Almighty. So for most it is a natural progression. So business provides an avenue to reach Nirvana or attain Moksha (spiritual liberation), just like any good person goes to heaven, a good business person also would go to Heaven. God the ultimate creator, call him whatever you want is merciful, kind and all loving. God provides and makes it easy for us to have what we truly need. For example for us to survive we need air. God provides – air is everywhere. Between quantum physics and cooking, God made cooking easier because it's needed for our survival...So God provides all that we need and makes it easier for us. Only religious peddlers, who do not understand God use fear to say we are going to hell for this or that. Work is one of the biggest avenues that God has provided so that we can go to Heaven

Appendix 6.3.3.2

This excerpt denotes the expression of M2KP in Case Study M1, who in her narrative describes how her spiritual values allows her to deal effectively with the shadow sides of business, such as corrupt business environments, politically motivated clan-based sentiments and dirty politics. It highlights that personal sacrifices have to be made to remain dedicated to one's own spiritual values.

“I do not usually react to a situation with my mind. I am often able to observe my own ego reactions to various situations. This spiritual lesson has helped me handle many difficult situations such as when dealing with difficult clients, suppliers and my ability to react calmly in those situations eventually pay off. I know others in my business who react with stormy-minds often end up in legal complications. I generally have been able to engage like a ‘karma yogi’. (She explains a karma yogi as one who lays emphasis on selfless action and service and work in harmony with the great power that controls and runs the universe) and although I am not immune to facing all kinds of annoying conflicts when I do engage, naturally I too face all kinds of trouble. But leading a spiritual life does not mean everything will remain calm and serene in your life. On the contrary, when you hold on to spiritual values and engage in the world of business, you are bound to experience all kinds of problems, and I need to be a catalyst to right some wrongs that occur and champion humanitarian causes alongside business-goals.

In Malaysia, the business community are quite clannish. There are many reasons for this. Some factors include our current government system that promotes race-based politics, which spills into the business environment, the larger community and the individuals involved all begin to play-up clan based sentiments. It can be quite disheartening when despite one's best efforts, the best person doesn't always win, yet I hang on to the words of my husband, who is a huge influence in my spiritual journey. He used to say ‘Profit is in God's hands and not in our hands, so just do the best you can under the given circumstances.’ I could have made lots more profit if I chose to play the dirty politics, but on hindsight, I am proud to say I am no lesser a person although I have suffered the wrath of other competitors who produced defaming articles about my business ventures in the local newspapers. Despite this I have not lost our reputation in this industry, I have peace of mind. I have not made huge amounts of profits only because I was guided by strong

values. But I am proud that our salaries are earned ethically and all my workers have gone on to live better lives.” (M2KP)

Appendix 6.3.3.4a

This narrative below is the full excerpt recorded from M2CW1 who is the Accounts and Administration Manager in M2KP's office. He narrates on the profound influence M2KP (and her husband – M2FM1) has on him, relating how he is highly inspired to work for them because of their personal and spiritual values which has strongly influenced him.

“I have learnt a lot from M2KP. Work-wise she taught me how to deal with contractors and sub-contractors to manage our many projects. I have worked in other organisations where I was nothing more than a paid employee. Here, I somehow feel like part of a family, an extended family. M2KP is also highly ethical in her business conduct and expects every one of us to maintain the same level of ethics in our work and business dealings. When I experience difficulties with our suppliers or sub-contractors she would always be available to provide advice and guidance and this motivates me to do my best for a boss who cares so genuinely to teach all that she knows. Her influence in my life is very strong. What she has taught me I have shared and taught others too. For example today, you saw how she handled the gangster yelling abuses downstairs. Even in such a tensed moment, she held her cool calm disposition and reacted to the situation that was most professional. Watching how she manages difficult situations is very inspiring for me, as she has far more experience and so we feel proud to be working for a competent and ethical boss like her.” When M2CW1 was questioned about whether M2KP's spiritual influence was felt at work he relates *“I was never religious before. I neither believed in prayer or in the existence of a compassionate God who answers your prayers. However, after coming to work for M2KP, I watched her dedication to her faith, and having a Hindu background myself, she took the liberty to teach me some things about our Hindu teachings. None in my own family had ever taught me anything worthwhile about the Hindu faith as she has. The most important lesson that I have taken from her is that God is within you. It's obvious to me that it is her faith that sees her through difficult moments in the office. Did you notice that she went to the altar to pray, before confronting the trouble-maker down-stairs, before even ringing the police? Her faith is so strong that it's clearly her first port of call. Both M2KP and her husband have made me feel proud to work in their office, because they walk the talk. They not only talk about being ethical, I can see they truly are ethical... they tell me If you earn one ringgit the wrong way, you'll end up incurring ten ringgit in pay-back. So earn every ringgit ethically.... I have noticed that I have emulated some of the lessons from them. I have become more spiritual and*

have the attitude that 'Everything happens for a reason' Despite many challenges and pressures in life I find myself enjoying life, taking every day as a new day and doing what I can. I used to be very stressed in my former place of employment. Here, although I do so much more than what I used to, I find, I'm less stressed and feel comfortable to discuss anything with M2KP without undue tension. Knowing that she is a very reasonable and caring person, it makes me want to try harder at work to meet her expectations. She trusts me to handle some of the responsibilities that she used to handle on her own. I feel proud that I have earned her trust and it's important to me to have her trust. It makes me highly committed at work. There are no walls at work. We all feel quite free at work. In fact, all of us at work are quite close. We are close friends and we even socialise after work hours. We respect M2KP and her husband for their professionalism and competence and mostly for their wisdom. We all have learnt a lot from both of them. They are like family and treat us like family. Recently when my father was involved in a road accident and I had to take ten days leave just to take care of dad and attend to matters at home, M2KP not only called me daily to check how my dad was recuperating, but she also supported my family by extending us a personal loan. Then on another occasion, I was admitted to the hospital for a viral fever and she even visited me in the hospital. These are some examples that I can share with you, there are many more reasons why I feel good and proud to work for M2KP. She is humble and very kind and yet very professional at the same time."

Appendix 6.3.3.4b

The following narration from M2CW2 further corroborates the compassionate nature of M2KP and reveals how her employees highly admire and respect her for her values, inspiring them to advance and progress in their professional and personal lives.

“M2KP is a different kind of boss from all my previous employers. She is someone who treats all equally regardless of their position or hierarchy in the organisation with the same level of respect. You can tell simply by observing the way she speaks to her staff. I have worked for previous employers who can be quite insulting, especially when dealing with staff lower down the hierarchy. M2KP on the other hand treats me as if I was a member of her own family. In fact we often get invited to participate in her family events and at home she treats us as if we are part of her extended family. I have learnt so much since coming to work for her. I specialised in air-conditioning mechanics, but since arriving to work for M2KP she gave me the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in the areas of planting, irrigation and electrical. I arrived as an ordinary farm-worker, but she noticed my enthusiasm to learn, and she started to encourage me to improve my skills and within a few months she promoted me to be a Supervisor. I find the work quite challenging. Especially at the project-site where I have encountered a lot of difficult people and circumstances. Yet because M2KP has been such a kind and generous employer, I have always strived to resolve work-related matters to the best of my abilities. It has given me a lot of practical experience on the job and I have become far more confident with my own capabilities especially since M2KP recognises my contributions and she was always at hand to guide and advise me in areas where I could improve. The thing I love most about my employer is that she trusts her staff. It has led us to trust in our own capabilities and I feel truly blessed for the trust she’s placed in me. I have improved not just as a worker but also as a person in leaps and bounds after coming to work for M2KP. Most of all M2KP is not at all self-centred or concerned only about her business affairs. She interacts with me showing concern for my own personal goals. I once told her that I hope to return to my homeland to get married, settle down and start a business of my own. I wouldn’t have been confident to share my personal plans with any of my previous employers, but M2KP spent her time giving me ideas and advice on the various options I can consider for a business venture in India. She has promised to help me with whatever knowledge she has gained running her own business. Not many business leaders

out there are like her. She is a very special person. I believe because she and her family members are so religious, that's why she is so generous, kind and supportive."

Appendix 6.3.3.4c

The following narratives were recorded with M2CW3 and M2CW4. They were farm workers who worked at M2KP's nursery. Here they relate their experience of working for M2KP.

“I didn't like my previous place of employment in Bangladesh or Kuwait because the environment was not friendly and I didn't feel happy. So I returned to India shortly to work in a mango plantation where the mangoes were exported to the state of Kerala. However, it was hard to support my son who is fifteen and daughter who is thirteen on my meagre income as my wife is a housewife and the single income was not sufficient. So when the opportunity to work in Malaysia arised I decided to try and was employed by M2KP on a work permit. I was lucky because I discovered that she was a very kind-hearted person and I trust her completely. When my family was experiencing some financial difficulties due to some unexpected medical bill, M2KP loaned me MR\$5,000 without interest to be deducted from my monthly wage. Not many persons would act so kindly. I take great pleasure and pride in maintaining the temple. I know M2KP is very pleased that her temple is being consecrated without fail with daily 'puja'. It's a great honour for me to be able to perform these daily prayers and rites.”(M2CW3)

“One hundred per cent, I will state that I have a very good boss!”

When he was asked to explain what he meant by that he continues.

“In so many ways she is a good boss. I have interacted with her during many different projects and on each occasion she was always so polite. She also pays us a very decent wage and whenever she visits the nursery, she always invites us to join her for a meal, sitting together with us, chatting about our lives, our families and so on. In my opinion she is a very loving person and has a good heart. Every 3 years, she pays for our air tickets to give us an opportunity to return home for three months so that we can have an extended time with our families. She is always considerate and kind towards the needs of our families. With the income I have earned here working for M2KP, I have managed to save enough to buy my own farm back in my village. I eventually will return home to take care of my elderly parents who suffer from high blood pressure and other ailments. My wife is also a farmer and we can work together on the small farm I've purchased. I want to return home to raise my ten year old son but if M2KP asks me to stay on to work for her a bit longer, I will definitely consider it or I may return at a later time to work for her

as she is someone I respect deeply. She has helped me and my family achieve a far better quality of life. I am forever grateful to M2KP.”

When he was questioned about his views on M2KP’s spiritual practice and influence, he had this to say.

“She has made me a better person. Although I believed in God, I was not always religious. But since coming here to work, with the temple rites being performed daily on this land, I too have become more pious. I used to be a non-vegetarian, but now I know the benefits of being vegetarian and knowing that my boss and her entire family are vegetarians, I have made efforts to be a vegetarian too. Whenever there are special religious occasions, I observe the event, when previously I wasn’t so bothered to do so. I would say she has not only helped me economically, but she has also alleviated me to be a better human being. I have become more responsible and caring towards my own family and others.” (M2CW4)

Appendix 6.4.3

The narrative below is that of A1KP who was relating the progress he was making on his spiritual seeking and journey. He trails into matters of family as well as work, showing his profound and earnest effort at aligning his spiritual values at work and all spheres of his life.

“I wouldn’t say I feel any intensification in my spiritual journey but rather a steady progression, since we last met. In terms of going to Church we have fallen right off over that period. I don’t feel very connected to the Anglican Church very much at all now as I used to. I still feel Christian but I don’t feel so much Anglican, which is interesting because I really like the Minister at the St John’s Anglican Church which is where we were used to attend. So it’s got nothing to do with the Church Minister whom I really like but rather the form of the Church, which I felt was getting more and more sort of high Anglican in its style and we probably started going less because our girls were getting older and they were getting less interested although they had many family services on Sundays which were quite free form but the girls who are fourteen and twelve now (referring to his daughters) had lost interest. Those are tricky years for teenagers and we’ve had some tough times as well over the last year or so. My older girl, A1FM2 was growing up quite too quickly, and although that was ok for me and my wife, but the school environment she was at, the school community felt she was a bit too out there. She was exploring her sexuality and the conservative school environment at Korowa (an Anglican Girls School) was sort of the nice girl school and though my daughter is a nice girl, she was seen to be a bit dangerous for having a boyfriend and stuff like that. We were ok with that unlike some of my friends, I’m quite comfortable with that but she was getting a bit ostracised and bullied by some of the older students at school. So she was having trouble at school, and that was hard for us when she won’t get out of bed to go to school. I didn’t know how to deal with that. I was doing stuff that I regret now. I was yelling at her sometimes, demanding that she gets out of bed, and I realise now it wasn’t the right thing to do. So we eventually changed her to a different school, so that was difficult, but we had a turning point around the middle of this year where when we were over at Port Douglas having a family holiday, A1FM2 was at her low point and was sobbing and sobbing and the next day she woke up and said to my wife that St. Michaels (the new school) was the right school for her and she seemed to have made a decision that day and never looked back. She started to get good marks at school and lots of good friends and she’s got another boyfriend now, so it’s been a really good year for her. The younger one, A1FM3

has also had a good year with good marks and is very settled at the old school where the older sister was having trouble at; it seems to be a much more suitable environment for her. So she is going well. So ultimately it's been a good year for me in terms of changing into what I think is the right vocation for me and working with some good people. I've never felt so appreciated in my life. I'm constantly getting so much positive feedback and I'm having to learn how to deal with that because I've never had it before. I've always found it so hard to receive all those compliments as I was always so willing to run down my own contribution or attribute it to others or that sort of thing and so I'm having to learn to take that with grace. Part of my journey through. that is about understanding, where all this comes from within me, what values I have that work against taking that with grace and being prepared to share with people the good things I've been doing because in the past I've been so against self-promotion. I'm reading a book about this at the moment which re-frames it for me in terms of values. It's called "The Truth about Sucking Up" which I find quite helpful. It's basically about your responsibility to tell the organisation all the good things you are doing so that they can give you more good things to do, and so that the right people get credit for the things they are doing rather than the wrong people to promote values-based change. But it has been really hard for me because I've become really conscious of the gratitude I have for being born in this country, for having such a privileged up-bringing with my parents making so many sacrifices for my education and this organisation giving me so many opportunities and I realise its making me so grateful that I was losing my edge and I'm not being as challenging to people around me that I should have been. Because I need to challenge people's thinking which is part of my role now, to challenge people, including my boss. So the hard part for me is that my boss has given me a fantastic opportunity, so therefore I won't challenge her – its kind of a grateful subservient mode and gratitude is not a good place to challenge from. I've had some terrific conversations with her (AIKP's boss) about that, coz the realisation came to me in the last six weeks, when I realised something inside me which I thought was a great value, gratitude, realising how privileged you are, I think they are great things but if overplayed, if you had too much of that it potentially holds you back from demonstrating your full potential. I think having an open heart and having gratitude is great and I don't want to lose that at all but I think when it was overplayed I was understating my contribution and not promoting my contributions to others, so I was relying on people really close to me to realise what I was doing. Because my current role fits right across the organisation, so it's important among other things that I tell people what I can do, what I do do, so that more of that work comes to me. So it is kind of like promoting the work that you do, so that you can do more of it..If I keep it to myself, then the opportunity to influence more

positively with more people, may not come. If I don't build up a profile, then people won't even know about the work I do. The level of humility I have is overplayed and it can backfire in my area of work. It's the whole thing about standing up - this is what I stand for, what I believe, this is what I do. This is not to say that humility is bad. I do believe very strongly in humility – I do believe it is important to be humble. I talk to people all the time about being humble because it creates readiness for more learning. Gratitude too is very appropriate and right to be grateful for what you are given. At the right level gratitude actually is a key driver in making you do new things with what you are given because you realise how lucky you are to get an opportunity to do something with it – so that's all good. I think the conflict I have arose from the recent discussions with my bosses and they are the ones who have this view that they have given me this opportunity and I don't want to bite their hand by challenging, pushing them, so I have become quite subservient to them in particular. And that is not a very good, in a sense this subservient relationship means I'm just doing what they want me to do rather than what I should do.

The feedback that I am getting from my bosses is that I should be promoting more of what I do for two reasons. Basically putting me into this role is an experiment in a sense, so it needs to work, to be seen to work, otherwise it would stop or they won't ever do it again within this bank - that I should be proud of what I do. Proud is not a word I like. I don't like that word. I don't like to feel proud. You are questioning why my reluctance and I think, sometimes when I have stepped up or put myself out there a little bit, something in response has happened that sort of put me back in my place. I feel like I've had that over the years, so 'Don't ever stand up too much, don't ever feel too good about yourself because as soon as you do that, God will strike you down'. It is like when you play golf, you play a few good holes and you feel 'Hey I can play this game, and then the next hole, you wipe it out.' So that's happened to me in the past. Now, I'm not conscious of that, I'm stretching the envelope on that these days. That's a belief that I have, that I am really challenging now because I'm in a fairly neutral position now where my roles cuts across all sub-cultures of the bank. There are two main things that stand out for me. One is probably at the time we first met when I was working in a role within the insurance business of the bank, when I was running a project which I wasn't very well equipped to run. We didn't have a very well planned project. Things went off the rail and we weren't able to deliver the outcome expected of this rather high profile project when it was due. So I was feeling very vulnerable in that position, but I still called out that it was not going to meet its deadline and I took responsibility. So I said very clearly to everybody, my boss,

my colleagues, everyone on the project, that this is my responsibility as the project director and I'm really pleased I did that. I don't know where it came from but it still freaks people out that I did it because so many people have fear in this organisation of taking responsibility because they believe if you get found out that you are responsible for something that goes wrong, it is the end of your career. And I'm still here today. It's really powerful and I like telling that story because I think most people fear taking accountability and responsibility for things. We get really mediocre results coming from a position of fear, whereas when you do take responsibility the support you get is immense. I actually got a lot of support from that, I got a lot of respect; people admired the fact that I did that. I remember, we didn't have to spend four weeks arguing about whose fault it was. We just got on and fixed the problem. That was quite a value-based decision that I took at that time, about responsibility and accountability. The second incident, coming out of that was knowing that I wasn't in the right place, in the right role. My boss knew I wasn't in the right place and I knew I wasn't in the right place. Normally in our organisation, people don't have a conversation about that. They wait for something to change so that somebody decides to move. People worry they will just get retrenched from positions and so no one has that kind of conversations and I did have that conversation. I was quite open to the idea of going to another section and doing something different and my boss at that time supported me, so even though I didn't do a fantastic job in that role, my boss knew I wasn't a bad person so he supported me. He made a structural change which meant my job at that time disappeared, I made it clear I didn't want the job offered to me, recommended a colleague of mine whom I knew was good for that role and decided that I should be doing something else. So my boss really appreciated that and he actually got me started to think what my perfect job would be. So I designed my perfect job, and I had many meetings with many managers in different sectors of the bank and I finally met my current boss who saw a fit and she gave me this job under the Human Resource umbrella, what we call People and Culture in our internal structure. So I designed the role, so that anything that I'm not good at is not part of the role. So it's a complete focus on my strength. So she and I now are much disciplined in the design of my work – so I can say to her, I'll do this bit but not this bit. I'll do the stuff that I'm really good at. There are other people who are much, much better at administration and owning and managing things, so they can do that, I do my bit. My bit is around mentoring, coaching, facilitation, workshops and being a leadership ambassador which is sharing stories about my leadership experience, challenging people's thinking and responding to tricky questions people have about values or emotional intelligence or what have you. I also do some business consulting. So what's interesting is that everything I've done in my business

career, whether I enjoyed it or not is now useful. So I have no regrets about any career decision I've ever made even though I know I've been in jobs that weren't the right ones, hated them sometimes, therefore they were periods when I really wasn't enjoying most of my life, because if I'm not enjoying my work, and if I'm under pressure at work, than I can't be present with anything else, it ruins everything. Despite all that, I have no regrets, it has got me to where I am. During those difficult times at work, it can spill over into my family life, when I've been very distant and not present, not able to really deal with anymore, so probably leaving the problems of raising my two kids largely to my wife. My current work-life balance is much better. I do a lot of self-disclosure in the training room as part of my role is to invoke humility in the trainees and so more often than not I'm sharing all those things that has gone wrong for me, what I've learnt from them, rather than what's gone well."

Appendix 6.4.1.3

In this excerpt, A1KP's two teenage daughters share why they didn't believe in God and didn't want to go to Church. A1KP admits that he too stopped attending Church although he was a regular church-goer prior, to accommodate the wishes of his children.

"We used to attend church every week before, but now we go only once a year for Christmas. We (referring to herself and her younger sister) mainly didn't want to go to church and that's why dad and mum stop going as often as well. I don't believe in God and I do believe that we go somewhere when we die, but I don't believe in God or Church, I didn't like anyone... I didn't get along with anyone in the Church...they were kind off different and whatever they were interested in, I couldn't understand at all. At this stage of my life, I'm not even curious to try to understand this whole stuff happening at the Church. If I had some personal challenges in my life, I rather talk to a friend and wouldn't imagine myself talking to someone in the Church or having a personal conversation with God or anything like that. If I had a sleepover and had to go to Church on Sunday morning I would be quite upset. But I know Dad believes in a God, and we don't really talk about that and since he does not drag us there every week and we go only for Christmas, we don't mind it, it is part of the whole Christmas celebration thing, but we won't go every week. Dad wouldn't make us go either. He is not that kind of person... if we didn't like something and we had our own personal choices on some things, he was always very accepting of that."

Appendix 6.4.1.4a

The narrative below is by A1CW1 who describes A1KP's values at work as principled and of high integrity.

"I really enjoy working with A1KP because he is much grounded and very constructive in what can be a highly political work environment within this large complex system, where many areas of our business is also highly political. I admire his ability to hold his own values in this highly political environment where I see people sometimes may hold a certain value within themselves, but do speak up or advocate their values and not follow thru with their behaviour, but I see with A1KP, on many occasions in a subtle way, not in a confrontational way, also not passively but in an active constructive way stand for what he believes. He is someone who will speak up and say things in his views. I've personally said to him that I enjoy his presence and that he makes a difference for me in this environment as a peer, a colleague, as a member in our Leadership team because of the voice that he brings and role that he plays in doing that. As an example in our bank's performance management process, which is an annual process done twice, once during mid-year and then at the end of the year review, it's based on a simple five point scale. The scale one being not performing at all and five stands for excellent performance which is distributed statistically. On our recent review, I saw how A1KP's comments added great value in shifting the dynamics of the behaviour of the whole group as this process which is highly political with 10-12 managers sitting in a room deliberating on whether to move someone upwards or downwards on the performance scale to meet the statistical distribution required. On a couple of occasions, A1KP spoke out and disagreed with the comments of some of the other managers who were giving their opinions and he voiced his concern to keep judgement on a person solely on evidence rather than on opinions of their supervisors, which was obviously a more fair way to review someone's performance. Again his style was not at all confrontational but got to change the dynamics in the room in a very subtle way. He was actually advocating his values and bringing his voice into the leadership team his comments based on his experience and his style during this process helped to shift the dynamics and make the behaviour of the other assessors in the room to become quite principled after that. This is why I value A1KP's presence in my work environment because he is quite subtle and people don't necessarily recognise the depth of his offering in the presence that he brings to others in such, a valuable skill particularly in a sensitive moment when someone is deciding on the performance fate of their colleagues. To give you another example here at this bank we

have two career paths, one is a “leadership” career path and the other is “professional specialist”, so Leaders have direct reports but if you are a Specialist you don’t have a team of direct reports to be called a leader. Can be a little confusing, but you could be still called a Leader with direct report or without, so these are the two career paths. Often people are pushed into or encouraged to take the direct report Leadership career path, but AIKP was quite clear he wanted to be on the specialist path. AIKP now falls under the second career path although previously he was on the Leader path with direct reports. AIKP was very clear to not wanting to have direct reports and had stayed true to his ideas of wanting to work alongside people in exchanging ideas and through his influence in coaching and mentoring skills AIKP didn’t want to take the direct report avenue at all. He has diligently stayed true to that purpose for himself although there was pressure to take on the more traditional route of Leadership path with direct reports which would bring accolades, organisational status where the extrinsic rewards are enormous with the organisational status and role and title and despite numerous occasions when people were trying to push him into that business unit leadership path , but AIKP was true to himself by continuously saying that in this point in time in his career and he would resist by saying ‘No, this is not the type of work I’d like to do, although I know I could really do well on that path, but what I really want to do now is on the Specialist path as a mentor, coach, facilitate and influence people through this second career path’. In fact he keeps getting seduced to take the other offers and it is very flattering for him to keep getting these opportunities to take the traditional path but fighting them off to stay true to his principles around what he wants to do show us his principles and integrity in what he believes and knows for himself.

“I can make an informed comment about this because I’ve had conversations with AIKP about this so this is not just purely based on my observation and perception of him, but I’ve had conversations with him when he’s shared that a large part of his working life at the bank he had to separate out who he truly was and he couldn’t bring the essence of who he was in past roles in the business. He couldn’t be holistic. I think he is now on that journey of transitioning from that state and almost revelling and now enjoying bringing all of who he is to work, although I think he is still playing with that and experimenting with that because he spent such a long part of his working life having to separate himself out. This role he is now is almost a crucible for him to be able to do that more blatantly. Our culture is not one culture as you would know of organisational cultures within a large organisation like us. There are very diverse cultures in our bank, the tones of which

are often set by the many leaders in many different sectors of the bank and the leaders in each sub-division within the overall business influence a lot of the sub-cultures of their business areas, and so there are certainly some sectors within the overall culture that don't encourage people to bring all of their full self to work. My experience is that men tend to separate out who they are more than women. AIKP has spoken to me about his values but he hasn't really spoken about his spirituality or rather he hasn't used the language around spirituality but he certainly has talked about his personal journey and what is meaningful to him at work when he is finding meaning and purpose in his personal life and his personal transitioning journey from a work context. He does speak about his family and bring narratives around his daughters and what he does with family over the weekend and that sort of thing. It is hard to categorise some of the things that AIKP brings – it actually is hard to put it into words or in business language because it's not necessarily something rational - and that is why a couple of times I have said to him 'I really enjoy your presence and offering in our team' It's more a sense or feeling that I get with his presence and bringing back to that principle page because from an organisational perspective it can be hard to live your personal values in this bank and I personally have struggled with my own values within the organisational context and I know of others who have also struggled and I don't find many people stand up for what they believe in, but I see AIKP does that but he does it in a constructive way rather than a destructive way. He actually engenders progress and change in behaviour rather than shutting people down, and opening paths. He is actually an interesting personality because he is exceptionally approachable, very relational, yet I wouldn't say he is an extrovert, I'd say he is quite introverted. But when you think of introverted people, you wouldn't think they are approachable yet AIKP is, even in his body language he is approachable for people to feel comfortable around him. He constantly is stopping by my desk without an agenda or a business need, simply to say 'How you going?' These subtle, friendly demeanour to lighten the work environment is a unique personality and though we have some people here at the bank who are approachable too but I'd say AIKP is a rare commodity and uncommon. As a final word and I've hinted on that before, I would say this is a highly political large system to work in and I have my own value dilemmas within that, and being very value orientated myself, the system can be very depersonalising and therefore AIKP has had a big impact for me and it's part of the reason I spoke up and told him how I appreciate his presence at work. I think it's important to tell people and give good feedback rather than to only give feedback on things that are not working. What AIKP represents to me is that there is a way in a system that is political and impersonal at times, his values and principle shows me that

even in a politically difficult and impersonal system, there is still a positive way to exist and enact change. AIKP is sort of a role model of that for me. At times when I feel de-energised by the environment, and I've seen AIKP operating and in an almost subtle way, he's changed the dynamic and given me hope, the hope that you can make a change by being true to who you are. That he can actually shift a system, and being such a large system – we are so large we've got forty thousand people globally and 28,000 people within Australia, the system can overwhelm sometimes and you can think 'Gee how can I make a difference in a system this big?' But because AIKP in just a really genuine understated way, in his everyday way – it is inspiring to think that I could also enact change with people because he does. Because I hadn't seen other people at that level of leadership, doing that before, when he came into the dynamic I thought ... hope is what I would describe it. His presence gave me hope, not to give up, and that you can make change, that you can live in a principled and value-centred way in an organisation and often we can lose sight of that. The only other thing I would say about AIKP is that he has an important quality in his dynamic is that he actually won't buy into the politics at the workplace, which is great, which is good, that is a really positive thing...so he kind of role models in a really constructive principled purposeful way of being but he doesn't speak badly about people, he won't bad mouth people, you know the human politics, people can get into the whole dialog around human politics, but you will never here AIKP speaking badly about somebody, so there is a privacy and wise counsel piece to him that he won't buy into that. So he doesn't create factions because he doesn't bad mouth or criticize. The fact that AIKP does not play politics, I know some people here in our system will say he is losing out because he is not in a general manager role and the fact that he is not on the traditional lucrative scale where he earns 'x' amount of salary and that is a traditional demarcation of one's success in this environment. But if you ask me, I would say absolutely no. I don't think he is losing out because he is doing work that is meaningful for him and that's much more purposeful for him than having a role which feels empty. I think it depends on how you perceive the concept of success and advancement here at this bank. So if you think success is the clothes you wear, the roles you play, status and money but I think if you ask me doing work that you really feel engaged in and feeling that you are making a difference and I see AIKP operating from the latter credo that I'm talking about rather than the earlier one. There is another colleague I have in this same team that I work, and he is an exceptional operator, very bright, but he and I have a disagreement on the concept of success and ambition. He sees success as gaining the next role and high salary and so if you were sitting here with him,

he would say yes AIKP loses out but I don't see it that way. I don't see myself in a role where I can't bring my (real) self to work. I wouldn't last very long.

Appendix 6.4.1.4b

This narrative below by A1CW2 where he relates AIKP's people managing skills and the ability to stay calm and deliver even in difficult circumstances when odds are stacked against him.

“I can summarise my relationship with AIKP as a leader who has a lot of emphasis about people. He certainly in many ways gives a lot of time to people. He also allows a level of dialog that is not hierarchical. He is not a command-control, master-servant kind of a leader, but treats one as a peer even when he had the managerial authority over someone. AIKP also openly admits to his strengths but also acknowledges where his own weaknesses are and therefor he looks for complementary aspects with others in the team he works for to help him and members of his team to all deliver. AIKP has a particular gift in how he deals with difficult confronting/conflicting situations where he is good at maintaining a level of composure and calmness in dealing with such circumstances. A specific example I can share was a key project in which I worked with AIKP in the bank and in that project he was going through a very, very difficult time then in terms of meeting deadline, keeping members of the stakeholders happy, at the same time having to deliver some bad news to the team and superiors because things were changing beyond anyone's control. In that conflict situation, in any corporations when things go wrong, there's always all kinds of blaming and finger-pointing happening and being the owner of the project, AIKP had to bear a lot of that directly and indirectly. In many heated moments, AIKP had to respond and work-out how to keep things moving through despite personal attacks, criticisms and defamation as well to a large extent. That's when I noticed AIKPs ability to keep calm in dealing with difficult situations and keep his head up and keep moving on.

I'd say it's from his own personality, linking to that, his personal value, probably through his upbringing and I'm aware that AIKP has been involved to a limited extent been involved as a Christian in an Anglican Church. That's probably one source. Secondly, I'd say his connection with his own family where he has two daughters and wife. They are an important part of his life and I'm sure he draws strength from that. Thirdly, he draws from his own career experience in dealing with many different leaders where he draws on the positive aspect of his past leaders and uses his experience with them to apply to his own leadership style. I know of at least one such leader whom AIKP thinks highly of. Also a General manager of AIKP at one point who was also my general manager and a few

others whom he looks to as examples such as two of our former CEOs (providing names that are withheld here for confidentiality reasons) of this bank from whom he might have drawn inspiration from. AIKP has often spoken highly of them and shared how he had enjoyed those eras under the leadership of those ex-CEOs.

He has spoken personally with me probably not so much of his deep spiritual values as such due to the level of professional distance maintained at the workplace which is natural I'd say. But he does talk fairly openly with me about his Church involvements as a Treasurer for many years in his old Church also being in the Church Committee and so forth. I'm also a Christian and personally my belief is a very big part of my life and I guess a very core reference point for me. In terms of whether I'm religious or spiritual, I'll probably say I'm more spiritual rather than religious. I am very very active in my own Church and my whole family are Christians and many decisions and things I do in my life are based on my Christian belief. So in that sense, I am very interested to know of my staff, my colleagues and bosses stand on spirituality, not to be intrusive, but to respect, understand but also in many ways build some sense of implied commonality, without imposing, but understanding different perspectives. Personally, I am very sensitive of the professional context we are in. Some of these spiritual aspects are very personal and can be freely expressed, however without getting in the way or putting pressure or awkwardness in our peers, so I am very sensitive to that. My knowledge of AIKP's membership in a church allows me to discuss with him on a deeper level rather than an introductory level as he understands more about this subject.

First of all, let me clarify that I've ever felt awkward or even restrict myself from expressing my views or my own personal belief. Perhaps within the context of the workplace, how much time and how much of a conversation around the subject of spirituality, how much of it I actually share, I treat it as no different to my conversations about say AFL (Australian Football) or other sports. Recognising that my peers might or might not be interested or may not actually want to discuss it, the same principle applies to my faith. But say someone asks me a question about my faith, then I would very openly discuss the subject without any qualms. Personally as a Christian I feel I am called to this workplace to do a good job, therefore my purpose to be here is to work the hardest I can, not so much because I'm a Christian, I must talk about it and you must believe what I believe. So simply by focussing on my job at hand I believe I'm a doing what my God commands us to do in terms of where we work."

“...in the way that there is a level of mutual respect and trust based on that common understanding. But having said that, I would not say neither AIKP or I rely on our Christian background to gain trust and respect as colleagues at work, but certainly it helps when there are some uncertainties it helps to bridge some of the gaps especially if you are asked to respect or trust a person without any prior knowledge or evidence, then in those instances a person’s faith is a good indicator of their value systems and the best basis you can fall on to judge their character when you know their personal belief. We can be more effective as an organisation if we can develop the level of trust beyond day to day mutual respect and professionalism at the workplace. This is especially true in our organisation where a large part of our infrastructure is built around the fact that we have to prevent fraudulent activities or things that are unethical according to our company policy because we can’t trust everybody, so we need to have security measures in place on many levels, not just physical level , e.g. in terms of governance, integrity of data, facts that we present, business case recommendations, relationships related to compliance issues, all those things we need to have validation upon validation upon validation that are tedious to make sure it’s not just based on trust but clear evidence and facts to back everything what we do. Although this is a good corporate governance practice, but my question or my challenge to the organisation is that, would the organisation be more efficient and effective, if we are able to create an in-built culture of trust and respect if we can remove some extra layers of validation to have just the sufficient amount necessary validation in order for us to move forward. We unfortunately have become overly litigious and cautious and so forth because we can’t trust one another and this is very evident every time when we have something go wrong in the organisation the level of defence and barriers from everybody just goes up another level – so even if I trust you, based on what has happened to others in the past, I have to not just double triple, quadruple check your work, which not only becomes inefficient, but also it builds barriers between people and therefore during crisis times, the organisation can often only rely on processes and evidence to get through and that’s when we go wrong too because the level of distrust heightens during such crisis. In such times people watch their own backs and abdicate their responsibilities even personal responsibilities, because, say I know it has gone wrong here, but someone else has signed off on it, so according to the process they have done the right thing but something has gone wrong and people are not taking responsibility. But if there is mutual trust and reliance upon one another I think the organisation can be a lot more nimble and a lot more effective. On an average in my

career of about fifteen odd years I'd say AIKP would be on an above average scale when it comes to the question of mutual trust and respect. I will put it down to a level of openness that AIKP has, and a non-hierarchical approach to things and also a level of mutual care that is being expressed for one another and that helps working in AIKP's team more enjoyable and so you come to work without the shadow of fear and you enjoy coming to work. As a final word, I'd like to say that AIKP is essentially a rarity in an organisation such as this. I don't want to over-exalt him but certainly in an organisation like this more of AIKPs would be great! That is a real compliment which comes down to his genuine care and respect of people which is one of his key traits."

Appendix 6.1.4.4c

This following narrative was provided by A1CW3 who was relating her impressions of A1KP and providing various reasons why she appreciates his presence and the values he brings to their workplace.

“Generally where does one’s personal values versus spiritual value start and finish, is hard to tell, and I haven’t had any conversations with A1KP whether he was religious or spiritual but he is one of the most strongly value-based person I know. He’s personal integrity is incredibly high - that would be my first observation of him. I’ve seen his consideration of people and his impact on people. So in his decision-making he thinks things thru not to upset anyone and he considers his impact on someone. He does that a lot more than anyone else here. He is incredibly empathetic and I think he generally just cares about people full-stop. You can see that in a lot of the decisions he makes every day. Also some of the things he struggles with, they all got to do with his care of people and not wanting to upset people and so from that perspective, I’ve seen a lot of examples of things he has done. The empathy for people that he displays is both your greatest strength and your greatest weakness too. In business and life sometimes, difficult decisions need to be made, for example in a closure of projects and people might lose their jobs, that may be the business reality, but the way in which that is managed or handled can be done with the most utmost integrity and consideration. So I think that empathetic people may struggle in those circumstances but they are the best people to deliver the bad news, so for a person like A1KP, if he had to sack someone, he would do it tougher than anyone, but I know that he will give the consideration and give the person the support and deliver the message in the best way. So I think a caring person is always going to feel it but at the same time you also have the greater capacity to handle that sort of delicate situations. He has got the skills and the coping mechanism to be able to do those difficult things. He is pretty unique..My perception of him is that he has been around a lot in this organisation and he is has probably seen the good, the bad and the ugly and he has made a conscious decision not to follow some of the bad paths and he has found an opportunity within the space that he is in now to express the things that he truly believes. He’s got to the point where he is not prepared to work in a culture that does not support his values and he has found the space and opportunity to be part of the development of a culture he wants to see. There is a window of opportunity within this environment for him to do that although the bank has still a long way to go but there are pockets and areas within the bank where he probably

don't want to be in, but certainly there are opportunities where his kind of values are being valued in some sectors of the bank and the environment he is in now, is conducive to what he wants to achieve.

“There are a lot of things to AIKP that I'd go ‘I wish I was that good as him’. His integrity is really honourable and I really admire him for that. I can relate to him on many levels. I think he wants to make a difference on many levels and I think, I'm the same way. I'm not the sort of person who has a career and goes home and has another life and for me work has to be 100% aligned to what I believe in and how I can make a contribution in this life that I have. I couldn't get out of bed in the morning just to go to a job, just to get a pay check. I know that when AIKP was not able to find purpose and meaning in his work that was when he disengage..AIKP has often shared some of his bad experiences and it is often the bad things that occur that gives you the greater guidance and I've certainly had plenty of conversations with him around times that were dark or things that had happened that he had found to be really confronting and challenged his values and believes. We had one conversation of a former CEO, a senior leader of our bank doing things which you can only shake your head as we both had similar values on what's the right thing to do.

We have a senior leadership development program in which we select only twenty five people from a list of fifty or sixty people who apply that we interview to attend the program. Four of us do the actual interviewing process and AIKP was helping out with one of the interviews. It is an hour's interview, going through a series of questions and AIKP was beginning to stress about it and becoming anxious for having to say no to fifty percent of the people he was interviewing. He didn't want to upset and hurt them, but he then realised he can give them the best experience of the interview but he was not responsible for the outcome – that they were responsible for it. It is an example of how much he cares about people. Although some people may view that as a sign of weakness this empathy he has for people and his difficulty in saying no to people, but I see it as a great strength. If you find sacking people easy, than there must be something wrong with you. It must be done with the best ability to give dignity for the person who is at the other end. AIKP doesn't openly talk about his religious or spiritual values, but he openly talks about his views and optimism about people, the desire to work together for a greater good, so you can definitely see that in the way he operates and sometimes it's explicit in the way you need to collaborate with people and he is very good at that, in including people and

have a collaborative outcome. When I think about my own context, I think that maybe because he has a religion, and found a set of principles from that. I wouldn't call myself religious, but I would call myself spiritual, very spiritual actually.. I have a greater sense of purpose and always believed in working towards something much bigger, and a sense of my role in wanting to make a difference. I also a quite open to the different theories perhaps more aligned to the Buddhist approach. I meditate; I like some of the principles in Buddhism such as non-attachment and personal accountability for things. Such as you can't control some of the things said to you, but you can control how you respond to that. That really challenges me and makes me a better person. These relationship matters happen in the office and at home. People don't park their emotions at the door when they walk into the office, so you have to deal with everything. You have to learn to deal with the person holistically. Companies are realising, particularly from the hours they are demanding from their employees that when employees bring emotions to work - it is not just the negatives but the positives as well, the emotional demand and personal resilience that you require out of your staff to do these jobs, you can't expect them to separate their selves, and the acknowledgement that people have been bringing their emotional selves to work for many many years anyway, even if it was not recognised. I remember in the past when you say you are from the HR area, it is hard to be taken seriously, because it was seen as the fluffy area.by the hard-core bank and you had to talk in banking talk or had to be in the banking suit, and there was a stereotype and I felt that shift recently and I feel much more comfortable with who I am and although part of that is due to who I am and where I'm at within myself, but part of that is due to a changing environment as well. People are more open to listening to different views now."

Appendix 6.4.1.4d

This narrative was provided by AIKP's former boss. It provided very useful contextual background information on the key participant.

“When I was his boss, I saw great potential in AIKP, but he himself lacked some self-confidence, but he had a lot of good ideas and we worked really well together and I used to support him with whatever authority I had to bring forth his ideas and we achieved very good things together. By the time I left my role, he was very successful. I left the bank because I didn't have any faith in the people I was reporting to at that time. AIKP has done well because typically people who rise in the bank through rank and file typically follow a particular path, and although he took some jobs that didn't suit his personality, he has done well in getting to where he really should be at. There were difficult times, because they were bringing in a lot of senior people from outside armed with MBAs and all that and he had to adjust to that despite his track record of working loyally within the same bank. Due to that he missed some really good opportunities but he stuck with it and has done well. A group of five to ten of us, some who have also left the bank like me, catch up for a coffee every two to three months and that's my relationship with AIKP now, as an old friend. We used to do this from the time we all use to work together. Some had moved on to other banks, some are retired like me and AIKP is a catalyst in making sure we continue this tradition of meeting every now and then to catch up with one another.”

“... most of the bad things that happened at the bank was due to the culture of poor values, where there was almost a tribe like culture, a gloating of how only the strong will survive in our system. AIKP at that time did not have the confidence or the maturity to handle the politics of that era, but he has done well under the circumstances and the fact that he is much older now and has moved to a very important job within the system is a huge credit to his ability to play the game well....of course he could have been more successful if he had taken a more traditional career path, because he was highly capable, but that would have meant the material extrinsic success and prestige that many in the banking industry are after. AIKP had deeper guiding principles and sought to live by his own definition of success. But he was always interested in the strategies of developing people and that in the long term is a good strategy to be a good contender to rise through the system with integrity. AIKP adjusted well by learning from his seniors and he looked at ways to develop others and be successful in the non-ambitious but value-driven style which

eventually has paid off for him. Looking around the room then, AIKP was the youngest but he showed great potential even then. I had my own religious values but I do not use those overt spiritual or religious languages, I just believed in doing the right thing and being honest and staying true to my values and perhaps AIKP has a similar style of leadership despite having profound personal values. My own spiritual values are confusing, some of the spiritual stuff I don't really understand, but I do try to live my own life based on higher values to leave the world a better place."

Appendix 6.1.4.4e

This narrative by A1CW5, A1KP's immediate boss, is about the changing culture in the bank towards the philosophy of allowing the whole self at work, which meant recognising that an individual is integrated to his deep values, beliefs and spiritual self.

“My view about maturing and am a believer of the whole self to work philosophy and I don't think it is healthy to have a different side to you socially to what you are at work. Who you are as an individual and that links to your values, beliefs and spiritual self is important to be conscious of, but I know a lot of people aren't. I am conscious of using that as part of your brand and what you stand for and I'm also quite intuitive to that. This organisation has taken strides to nurture the whole person and there are opportunities for strongly emotive individuals like A1KP to thrive in their careers in sync with their own personal values, but the only caveat to that would be that there are many sub-cultures within this organisation so some may be ahead and other behind on that call. The culture that A1KP is in now, is perhaps more conducive to him exploring and trying out some different career choices and how he applies his own values through the work he does. This is too large an organisation to adopt the progressive culture that we have in our Unit, there would certainly be some sectors are more receptive than others. They are there in pockets. In fairness to our senior executives, some of our more leftist things we do in our Leadership programs have always been supported by the top-leadership of this organisation. In our view, the only way to create true leadership change is to hit at the beliefs and value level. We have a very heavy focus on context. So we try to take people out of their generally privileged environments and help them see leadership through a different lense, whether it is indigenous issues or issues of sustainability, homelessness, whatever might to explore leadership at one's own personal values response to acquire a true lense on what does it mean for an individual to be a true leader in our bank. So how do you bring yourself to leadership? So we have highly experiential scenarios set up for them to experience their own tacit mental models to bring them into awareness, so we ask our people how they would approach some of those complex , highly ambiguous issues like indigenous issues from a leadership perspective. When they do a deep dive from all those different angles, we get them to look at it from a values level, principles level, belief level etc. by first looking at how it relates to yourself, before linking back to our own organisation. All these deep psychological processes are generally done outside of our training rooms here, sometimes we do pre and post pieces in this environment, but our

preference is touch it, feel it, we take them out to not for profit sites to give them the exposure. Our biggest learning is that some of our training doesn't work, sometimes we need to tweak our programs and our results are getting better. It can be really hard to give a tangible outcome especially to our bankers who are used to facts and figures and they are eager by asking 'tell me what I need to do', but it is not about ticking boxes. So when we say to them you need to stop thinking about it, you need to feel it, that's a sign of a good leader, you need to experiment and I can say we are successful by the way in which we really push people out of their comfort zones, but we do that in a well-supported environment and that is what brings them to the values, belief level. Certainly our leadership programs involve a little anxiety and fear particularly at the start, but once we had our first group of 25 people who went through our initial program for the subsequent four years we have had a huge demand, so our former participants tell their stories, warts and all and through that we have grown.

Appendix 6.3.4.2

In this excerpt, A1KP's two teenage daughters share why they didn't believe in God and didn't want to go to Church. A1KP admits that he too stopped attending Church although he was a regular church-goer prior, to accommodate the wishes of his children.

"We used to attend church every week before, but now we go only once a year for Christmas. We (referring to herself and her younger sister) mainly didn't want to go to church and that's why dad and mum stop going as often as well. I don't believe in God and I do believe that we go somewhere when we die, but I don't believe in God or Church, I didn't like anyone... I didn't get along with anyone in the Church...they were kind off different and whatever they were interested in, I couldn't understand at all. At this stage of my life, I'm not even curious to try to understand this whole stuff happening at the Church. If I had some personal challenges in my life, I rather talk to a friend and wouldn't imagine myself talking to someone in the Church or having a personal conversation with God or anything like that. If I had a sleepover and had to go to Church on Sunday morning I would be quite upset. But I know Dad believes in a God, and we don't really talk about that and since he does not drag us there every week and we go only for Christmas, we don't mind it, it is part of the whole Christmas celebration thing, but we won't go every week. Dad wouldn't make us go either. He is not that kind of person... if we didn't like something and we had our own personal choices on some things, he was always very accepting of that."

Appendix 6.4.3

The narrative below is that of A1KP who was relating the progress he was making on his spiritual seeking and journey. He trails into matters of family as well as work, showing his profound and earnest effort at aligning his spiritual values at work and all spheres of his life.

“I wouldn’t say I feel any intensification in my spiritual journey but rather a steady progression, since we last met. In terms of going to Church we have fallen right off over that period. I don’t feel very connected to the Anglican Church very much at all now as I used to. I still feel Christian but I don’t feel so much Anglican, which is interesting because I really like the Minister at the St John’s Anglican Church which is where we were used to attend. So it’s got nothing to do with the Church Minister whom I really like but rather the form of the Church, which I felt was getting more and more sort of high Anglican in its style and we probably started going less because our girls were getting older and they were getting less interested although they had many family services on Sundays which were quite free form but the girls who are fourteen and twelve now (referring to his daughters) had lost interest. Those are tricky years for teenagers and we’ve had some tough times as well over the last year or so. My older girl, A1FM2 was growing up quite too quickly, and although that was ok for me and my wife, but the school environment she was at, the school community felt she was a bit too out there. She was exploring her sexuality and the conservative school environment at Korowa (an Anglican Girls School) was sort of the nice girl school and though my daughter is a nice girl, she was seen to be a bit dangerous for having a boyfriend and stuff like that. We were ok with that unlike some of my friends, I’m quite comfortable with that but she was getting a bit ostracised and bullied by some of the older students at school. So she was having trouble at school, and that was hard for us when she won’t get out of bed to go to school. I didn’t know how to deal with that. I was doing stuff that I regret now. I was yelling at her sometimes, demanding that she gets out of bed, and I realise now it wasn’t the right thing to do. So we eventually changed her to a different school, so that was difficult, but we had a turning point around the middle of this year where when we were over at Port Douglas having a family holiday, A1FM2 was at her low point and was sobbing and sobbing and the next day she woke up and said to my wife that St. Michaels (the new school) was the right school for her and she seemed to have made a decision that day and never looked back. She started to get good marks at school and lots of good friends and she’s got another boyfriend now, so it’s been a really good year for her. The younger one, A1FM3

has also had a good year with good marks and is very settled at the old school where the older sister was having trouble at, it seems to be a much more suitable environment for her. So she is going well. So ultimately it's been a good year for me in terms of changing into what I think is the right vocation for me and working with some good people. I've never felt so appreciated in my life. I'm constantly getting so much positive feedback and I'm having to learn how to deal with that because I've never had it before. I've always found it so hard to receive all those compliments as I was always so willing to run down my own contribution or attribute it to others or that sort of thing and so I'm having to learn to take that with grace. Part of my journey through that is about understanding where all this comes from within me, what values I have that work against taking that with grace and being prepared to share with people the good things I've been doing because in the past I've been so against self-promotion. I'm reading a book about this at the moment which re-frames it for me in terms of values. It's called "The Truth about Sucking Up" which I find quite helpful. It's basically about your responsibility to tell the organisation all the good things you are doing so that they can give you more good things to do, and so that the right people get credit for the things they are doing rather than the wrong people to promote values-based change. But it has been really hard for me because I've become really conscious of the gratitude I have for being born in this country, for having such a privileged up-bringing with my parents making so many sacrifices for my education and this organisation giving me so many opportunities and I realise its making me so grateful that I was losing my edge and I'm not being as challenging to people around me that I should have been. Because I need to challenge people's thinking which is part of my role now, to challenge people, including my boss. So the hard part for me is that my boss has given me a fantastic opportunity, so therefore I won't challenge her – it's kind of a grateful subservient mode and gratitude is not a good place to challenge from. I've had some terrific conversations with her (AIKP's boss) about that, coz the realisation came to me in the last six weeks, when I realised something inside me which I thought was a great value, gratitude, realising how privileged you are, I think they are great things but if overplayed, if you had too much of that it potentially holds you back from demonstrating your full potential. I think having an open heart and having gratitude is great and I don't want to lose that at all but I think when it was overplayed I was understating my contribution and not promoting my contributions to others, so I was relying on people really close to me to realise what I was doing. Because my current role fits right across the organisation, so it's important among other things that I tell people what I can do, what I do do, so that more of that work comes to me. So it is kind of like promoting the work that you do, so that you can do more of it...If I keep it to myself, then the opportunity

to influence more positively with more people may not come. If I don't build up a profile, then people won't even know about the work I do. The level of humility I have is overplayed and it can backfire in my area of work. It's the whole thing about standing up - this is what I stand for, what I believe, this is what I do. This is not to say that humility is bad. I do believe very strongly in humility – I do believe it is important to be humble. I talk to people all the time about being humble because it creates readiness for more learning...Gratitude too is very appropriate and right to be grateful for what you are given. At the right level gratitude.actually.is a key driver in making you do new things with what you are given because you realise how lucky you are.to get an opportunity to do something with it – so that's all good. I think the conflict I have arose from the recent discussions with my bosses and they are the ones who have this view that they have given me this opportunity and I don't want to bite their hand by challenging, pushing them, so I have become quite subservient to them in particular. And that is not a very good, in a sense this subservient relationship means I'm just doing what they want me to do rather than what I should do.

The feedback that I am getting from my bosses is that I should be promoting more of what I do for two reasons. Basically putting me into this role is an experiment in a sense, so it needs to work, to be seen to work, otherwise it would stop or they won't ever do it again within this bank - that I should be proud of what I do. Proud is not a word I like. I don't like that word. I don't like to feel proud. You are questioning why my reluctance and I think, sometimes when I have stepped up or put myself out there a little bit, something in response has happened that sort of put me back in my place. I feel like I've had that over the years, so 'Don't ever stand up too much, don't ever feel too good about yourself because as soon as you do that, God will strike you down'. It is like when you play golf, you play a few good holes and you feel 'Hey I can play this game, and then the next hole, you wipe it out.' So that's happened to me in the past. Now, I'm not conscious of that, I'm stretching the envelope on that these days. That's a belief that I have, that I am really challenging now because I'm in a fairly neutral position now where my roles cuts across all sub-cultures of the bank. There are two main things that stand out for me. One is probably at the time we first met when I was working in a role within the insurance business of the bank, when I was running a project which I wasn't very well equipped to run. We didn't have a very well planned project. Things went off the rail and we weren't able to deliver the outcome expected of this rather high profile project when it was due. So I was feeling very vulnerable in that position, but I still called out that it was not going to

meet it's deadline and I took responsibility. So I said very clearly to everybody, my boss, my colleagues, everyone on the project, that this is my responsibility as the project director and I'm really pleased I did that. I don't know where it came from but it still freaks people out that I did it because so many people have fear in this organisation of taking responsibility because they believe if you get found out that you are responsible for something that goes wrong, it is the end of your career. And I'm still here today. It's really powerful and I like telling that story because I think most people fear taking accountability and responsibility for things. We get really mediocre results coming from a position of fear, whereas when you do take responsibility the support you get is immense. I actually got a lot of support from that, I got a lot of respect, people admired the fact that I did that. I remember, we didn't have to spend four weeks arguing about whose fault it was. We just got on and fixed the problem. That was quite a value-based decision that I took at that time, about responsibility and accountability. The second incident, coming out of that was knowing that I wasn't in the right place, in the right role. My boss knew I wasn't in the right place and I knew I wasn't in the right place. Normally in our organisation, people don't have a conversation about that. They wait for something to change so that somebody decides to move. People worry they will just get retrenched from positions and so no one has that kind of conversations and I did have that conversation. I was quite open to the idea of going to another section and doing something different and my boss at that time supported me, so even though I didn't do a fantastic job in that role, my boss knew I wasn't a bad person so he supported me. He made a structural change which meant my job at that time disappeared, I made it clear I didn't want the job offered to me, recommended a colleague of mine whom I knew was good for that role and decided that I should be doing something else. So my boss really appreciated that and he actually got me started to think what my perfect job would be. So I designed my perfect job, and I had many meetings with many managers in different sectors of the bank and I finally met my current boss who saw a fit and she gave me this job under the Human Resource umbrella, what we call People and Culture in our internal structure. So I designed the role, so that anything that I'm not good at is not part of the role. So it's a complete focus on my strength. So she and I now are much disciplined in the design of my work – so I can say to her, I'll do this bit but not this bit. I'll do the stuff that I'm really good at. There are other people who are much, much better at administration and owning and managing things, so they can do that, I do my bit. My bit is around mentoring, coaching, facilitation, workshops and being a leadership ambassador which is sharing stories about my leadership experience, challenging people's thinking and responding to tricky questions people have about values or emotional intelligence or what have you. I also do some

business consulting. So what's interesting is that everything I've done in my business career, whether I enjoyed it or not is now useful. So I have no regrets about any career decision I've ever made even though I know I've been in jobs that weren't the right ones, hated them sometimes, therefore they were periods when I really wasn't enjoying most of my life, because if I'm not enjoying my work, and if I'm under pressure at work, than I can't be present with anything else, it ruins everything. Despite all that, I have no regrets, it has got me to where I am. During those difficult times at work, it can spill over into my family life, when I've been very distant and not present, not able to really deal with anymore, so probably leaving the problems of raising my two kids largely to my wife. My current work-life balance is much better. I do a lot of self-disclosure in the training room as part of my role is to invoke humility in the trainees and so more often than not I'm sharing all those things that has gone wrong for me, what I've learnt from them, rather than what's gone well".

Appendix 7.2.2

This response was from A1CW2 who was narrating his disappointment that In Australia, religion has been watered down to its lowest denomination as there was a culture of political correctness when it comes to the subject of religion particularly in the workplace, despite no overt policy against its practice

“The organisation is located in a secular world. Which means we can only extend our conversations and the way we connect with one another on a secular level, unless if it is invited, openly invited... Christmas and Easter in Melbourne for example has been subjected to a level of political correctness in our society to not even spell the word, by turning it into something like “Seasons Greetings”. That to me is very sad, but its beyond my control, but to answer your question why this has happened, I would say that especially in the Australian culture and where we are in the 21st century we have entered an age of pluralism to the extent that although we.in some way tolerate and recognise that there are many different belief and different faiths, to the point that we almost bring it down to the lowest denominator, so that we do not offend anybody by being too expressive about it...I need to clarify that in this bank where I work, there wasn’t any policy against expression of faith or any such restriction. So in fact, we can still quite freely express our views on anything if we chose to, but there is an unwritten code about it.” (A1CW2)